

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
NATIONAL CANCER REGISTRY BOARD (NCRI)**

**HELD ON**

**20 MARCH 2024 AT 1.30 PM**

**AT**

**BUILDING 6800, CORK AIRPORT BUSINESS PARK, KINSALE ROAD, CORK / MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**1. Register of Attendance**

**Present**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Dr Jerome Coffey	Chairperson	JC
Ms Mary Bourke	Board Member	MB
Mr Niall Murphy	Board Member	NM
Dr Robert O'Connor	Board Member	ROC
Ms Cathy Enright	Board Member	CE
Prof Mark Lawler	Board Member	ML
Ms Ellen Farrell	Board Member	EF

**In Attendance**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Prof Deirdre Murray	NCRI Director	DM
Ms Rose O'Connor	NCRI Corporate Operations Manager	COM
Ms Catherine McGovern	NCRI Business & Planning Manager	CMcG
Ms Grace Murray	NCRI Governance & Compliance Officer	GM
Mr Thanasie Kaldanis	eCancer Data Registrar Supervisor	TK (for part thereof)
Ms Tracy Kelleher	Acting Data Integration Manager	DIM (for part thereof)

**2. Quorum**

**IT WAS NOTED THAT** there was a quorum of board members present at the meeting.

**3. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

The board members confirmed that they had no conflict of interest in the matters to be discussed at the meeting.

**4. Board Composition**

The Chairperson reported to the meeting that, as discussed at the previous board meeting, the Chairperson had written to the Minister for Health to notify the Minister of his intention to resign from his position as Chairperson of the board. **IT WAS AGREED THAT** the Chairperson would provide a further update to the board once an effective date of resignation had been agreed with the Minister.

## 5. Director's Report

- 5.1. DM reported to the board on the NCRI's strategic and operational objectives, during which the following points were noted and discussed:

### Strategy

- 5.1.1. the Strategic Plan 2024-2026 (the "**Strategic Plan**") was successfully launched by the Minister for Health on 4 March 2024 at the Department of Health (the "**DoH**");

### KPIs

- 5.1.2. key metrics for the first quarter of 2024 ("**Q1**") were presented to the meeting and significant inroads into the backlog accrual were noted;

### Cybersecurity

- 5.1.3. technical measures to address cybersecurity threats were highlighted;

### Cancer Intelligence

- 5.1.4. a report on metastatic breast cancer in Ireland was published in January; and

### Individual Health Identifier (IHI)

- 5.1.5. the NCRI is integrating the IHI (a number that uniquely identifies a person who has used, is using or may use health services in Ireland) into its registration system. The NCRI has provided HSE Health Identifiers ("**HIDs**") with a random sample of cases. HIDs have matched these against their database and returned a 78% match, which is a very good result. The NCRI has now sent all its records to HIDs and they are matching this and will return an IHI for these records.

- 5.2. DM reported to the meeting that the NCRI is developing a dataset anonymisation standard operating procedure (the "**Anonymisation SOP**") in order to improve the NCRI's performance in its statutory function to promote and facilitate the use of its data in research.

- 5.3. There followed a discussion on the current hurdles to facilitating data requests for research purposes, the benefits of the Anonymisation SOP and the protections that will be incorporated into the Anonymisation SOP (for e.g. written assurances from researchers). **IT WAS NOTED THAT** the proposal to implement an Anonymisation SOP had been reviewed by the interim Data Protection Officer from a data protection perspective.

- 5.4. Following detailed discussion in relation thereto, **IT WAS AGREED THAT** the adoption of an Anonymisation SOP was in the best interests of the NCRI in order to allow it to perform its statutory functions.

- 5.5. **IT WAS NOTED THAT** a revised cyber incident response plan would be presented to the board at the June board meeting following completion of a tabletop exercise to test the NCRI's response to a cybersecurity incident. **IT WAS AGREED THAT** the cyber incident response plan should include a communication plan whereby any serious cyber incident would be brought to the attention of the board in real time.

## 6. Service Plan Dashboard

- 6.1. CMcG presented the service plan dashboard to the meeting and explained to the meeting how the dashboard measures the NCRI's progress against its strategic objectives each quarter.

- 6.2. The board reviewed the service plan dashboard and the status of each of the 2024 goals was noted by the board.

## **7. Strategy Implementation Plan**

- 7.1. CMcG presented the draft strategy implementation plan for 2024 (the “**Implementation Plan**”) to the meeting which had been updated to reflect the board’s comments at the previous board meeting.
- 7.2. CMcG explained that while the Implementation Plan has been prepared at a strategic level, it is supported by operational annual plans at department level. It was noted that the department managers monitor and oversee the delivery of these operational plans, with progress monitored monthly during Senior Management Team meetings.
- 7.3. Following discussion in relation thereto, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT**, subject to the insertion of an “output” column, the Implementation Plan be approved and adopted accordingly.

## **8. Data Collection Update**

- 8.1. TK joined the meeting to provide the board with an update on the staffing, organisation, responsibilities, and activity of the Cancer Registration Department.
- 8.2. TK highlighted current challenges facing the department together with actions taken to mitigate same. There followed a discussion on the training of eCDRs and potential measures to assist the Cancer Registration Department in alleviating the backlog were suggested and discussed.
- 8.3. Departmental achievements in 2023 and challenges and opportunities for the department in 2024 were also noted and discussed.

## **9. Data Integration Update**

- 9.1. DIM joined the meeting and presented an overview of the Data Integration Department. DIM reported on the department’s areas of responsibility and data sources in detail and provided an overview of the key projects the department is working on with the NCRI’s stakeholders.
- 9.2. There followed a discussion on the challenges facing the Data Integration Department, steps taken to mitigate same and recent departmental achievements.

## **10. Stakeholder Engagement Report**

The board noted the stakeholder engagement report which detailed all strategic and executive level stakeholder engagements that have taken place since the last board meeting.

## **11. ARC Report to the Board**

- 11.1. EF provided a report to the board on the Audit & Risk Committee (“**ARC**”) meeting held earlier that morning, during which the following points were highlighted:

#### **System of Internal Financial Control (“SIFC”)**

- 11.1.1. Mazars joined the ARC meeting to present the internal audit report on the review of the NCRI’s system of internal financial control for 2023 (the “**2023 SIFC Report**”);
- 11.1.2. Mazars have provided a “Substantial Assurance Level” opinion for the NCRI’s SIFC for 2023, being the highest ranking assurance level available. No high or medium priority observations were identified and six low priority observations were identified;
- 11.1.3. having reviewed the 2023 SIFC Report, the ARC formally recommends that the board confirm to the Minister for Health that: (i) the NCRI has an appropriate SIFC in place; and (ii) that a review of the effectiveness of the NCRI’s SIFC has been completed;

#### **Annual Financial Statements**

- 11.1.4. draft annual financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2023 (the “**2023 Financial Statements**”) were reviewed by the ARC.
- 11.1.5. subject to the minor amendments to the notes suggested by the ARC, the ARC formally recommends that the 2023 Financial Statements be approved by the board;

#### **Letter of Allocation & Budget Profile**

- 11.1.6. having reviewed the letter of allocation and budget profile for 2024, the ARC formally recommends that they be approved by the board;

#### **Financials**

- 11.1.7. management accounts as at 29 February 2024 were reviewed by the ARC;

#### **Data Protection**

- 11.1.8. the interim DPO, Pembroke Privacy, provided an update to the ARC on data protection matters;
- 11.1.9. no data breach incident was reported in Q1;
- 11.1.10. one near miss incident was reported internally in Q1 however following investigation it was determined that there was no risk to the data subject involved;
- 11.1.11. Pembroke Privacy as interim DPO are undertaking a comprehensive review of the NCRI’s data protection policies, benchmarking them against legislative and industry standards with a view to converting such policies into a data protection policy manual. A first draft of the data protection manual is expected to be shared with the ARC for review in late April / early May;

#### **Risk**

- 11.1.12. the ARC reviewed the corporate risk register which is in the process of being finalised with the support of a risk expert from Mazars;
- 11.1.13. the ARC and certain board members received risk training from Mazars on 23 February 2024;
- 11.1.14. the ARC has suggested that the NCRI adopt a standalone cybersecurity risk register. This proposal will be considered by Senior Management at a risk monitoring meeting in April;
- 11.1.15. the ARC recommends that the board hold a meeting in April to discuss the risk register once finalised;

#### **ARC Membership & Succession Planning**

- 11.1.16. a skills matrix was circulated to the ARC for completion prior to the meeting in order to assess whether the ARC as a whole has the requisite skills and experience to allow it to perform its functions and to assist the ARC in succession planning. Following a review of the results, the ARC are satisfied that its members have the necessary skillsets and the external committee member has confirmed his commitment to continuing his role on the ARC; and

### **External Board Training**

11.1.17. following the success of the risk training session in February, the ARC would like the board to consider whether it would benefit from a governance training session with Mazars later in the year.

11.2. Following a discussion in relation to the foregoing, **IT WAS AGREED THAT** a board meeting be scheduled in April to discuss the finalised corporate risk register and that a governance training session with Mazars be arranged for later in the year.

### **12. Annual Review of System of Internal Financial Control (“SIFC”)**

12.1. The board considered the NRCI’s SIFC and having regard to the 2023 SIFC Report and the ARC’s recommendations in respect of same, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT**:

12.1.1. the NRCI has an appropriate SIFC in place; and

12.1.2. the appropriate annual confirmations be made to the Minister for Health in respect of the NRCI’s SIFC.

### **13. Annual Financial Statements for the Financial Year Ended 31 December 2023**

13.1. **IT WAS NOTED THAT** a copy of the draft 2023 Financial Statements was circulated to the board for review prior to the meeting.

13.2. Having considered the 2023 Financial Statements and having regard to the ARC’s recommendations in relation thereto, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT**, subject to the amendments requested by the ARC:

13.2.1. the 2023 Financial Statements be approved in substantially the form circulated to the board; and

13.2.2. once finalised, the Chairperson and the Chairperson of the ARC be empowered, directed, authorised and appointed to execute the 2023 Financial Statements and associated documentation on behalf of the NRCI with such amendments thereto as may approved by the chairpersons, such approval to be conclusively determined by the execution thereof.

### **14. Letter of Allocation & Budget Profile**

14.1. **IT WAS NOTED THAT** the letter of allocation and budget profile for 2024 (the “**2024 Budget**”) had been circulated to the board for review prior to the meeting.

14.2. Having considered the 2024 Budget and having regard to the ARC’s recommendations in relation thereto, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT** the 2024 Budget be approved and adopted accordingly.

### **15. Skills Matrix & Succession Planning**

**IT WAS NOTED THAT** the consolidated results of the board skills matrix would be presented to the board at its next meeting following completion by all board members.

## 16. Great Place To Work Initiative (“GPTW”)

16.1. The board considered a proposal to continue with the GPTW initiative for an additional three year period and noted the costings involved. The board discussed the benefits to the NCRI in participating in the initiative and, in particular, the benefits of using the GPTW branding when recruiting for new roles.

16.2. Following a discussion in relation to the foregoing, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT** the NCRI continue its participation in the GPTW initiative for an additional three year period.

## 17. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

17.1. The draft minutes of the previous board meeting held on 12 February 2024 (the “**Previous Minutes**”) were produced to the meeting and reviewed by the board.

17.2. Following a discussion in relation to the foregoing, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT**, subject to the minor amendment discussed:

17.2.1. the Previous Minutes be approved in the form produced to the meeting; and

17.2.2. the Chairperson be authorised to sign the Previous Minutes in his capacity as Chairperson of the current meeting.

## 18. Protected Disclosures

18.1. The meeting was reminded that the NCRI is required under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 (as amended) to collect and publish certain information on the number of protected disclosures it receives each year.

18.2. **IT WAS NOTED THAT** the NCRI had not received any protected disclosures in 2023. **IT WAS FURTHER NOTED THAT** the required form had been submitted to the DoH confirming that no protected disclosures had been received and that a statement to that effect will also be published on the NCRI website in advance of the relevant statutory deadline (being 31 March 2024).

## 19. Close

There being no further business, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed.

*[signature page follows]*