

**Minutes of the Board meeting of the Health Research Board
held on Friday, 1st April 2022 at Grattan House, 67-72 Lower Mount Street,
Dublin 2.**

Present: Prof B Hannigan (Chairperson)
Dr T Cunningham (on Zoom)
Prof S Donnelly (on Zoom)
Prof T Fahey
Prof M Harding
Dr J Ling (on Zoom)
Dr T McWade
Prof C Normand
Dr C Saidlear

In attendance: Dr M O'Driscoll, Chief Executive Officer
Ms C Cronin, Board Secretary and Head of Governance, attended for items 1 to 10
Mr M Morgan, Director of Corporate Operations, attended throughout and took minutes from item 11 to the end of the meeting.
Dr H. Sinclair, Director of Information & Evidence, attended for item 6.
Dr T Maguire, Director of Research Strategy and Funding. attended for items 6, 9, 10 and 11.
Mr D Murphy, Finance Manager, attended for items 6 and 13.
Dr A. Montessanti, Programme Manager Investigator-led Grants, Research Careers and Enablers, attended for item 10.
Dr M Hiney, Head of International Co-operation, Evaluation and Targeted Programmes attended for item 11.
Dr J Long attended for item 12.

1. Conflict of Interest

Prof Normand declared a conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the Research Programme – Former Residents of Mother and Baby Homes and Related Institutions and left the meeting while this matter was discussed.

Prof Fahey and Prof Normand declared a conflict of interest in the relation to the matter of the independent evaluation of TILDA and left the meeting while this matter was discussed.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting and proposal for the publication of the minutes on the HRB website

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 18th February 2022 were approved and it was agreed to publish the minutes on the HRB's website.

3. Matters arising and action points from previous meetings

The Secretary reported that all of the action points from the previous meeting had been completed.

4. CEO's Report

Update on National Innovation Strategy

The CEO reported that the draft of the National Innovation Strategy would not be subjected to any further wider consultation process and would now go to Cabinet. She said that at a recent meeting with DFERIS and the DOH it had been agreed to amend the wording of the actions on health research. It was agreed that the National Innovation Strategy would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Board.

Resignation of the Head of the National Office for National Research Ethics Committees

The CEO reported that Dr Jennifer Ralph James had resigned her position as Head of the National Office for National Research Ethics Committees.

The CEO also reported on:

- Update on i-Scholars
- Citizens Jury on Genomics
- UK extends its guarantee of funding for successful Horizon Europe researchers until the end of 2022
- Updates from around the organisation
- Evidence Unit work programme 2022
- HRB Media Coverage

5. Report from the HRB Audit & Risk Committee

Prof Normand, Chairperson of the Audit & Risk Committee reported on a meeting held earlier that day. He informed the Board that Mazars had been reappointed as internal auditors to the HRB following a tender process.

He said that the Committee had also discussed the matter of the resignation of the Head of the National Office for National Research Ethics Committees (NREC Natl Office) and the need to clarify the governance arrangements and lines of accountability between the HRB, the NREC Natl Office and the Department of Health. It was agreed that the CEO would provide an update at the next meeting.

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10th December 2021 had been circulated to members of the Board.

6. HRB Budget and Service Plan 2022

The CEO informed the Board that the Department of Health's letter setting out the HRB's non-capital funding allocation for 2022 had been received on 25th April 2022. She said that the information contained in the letter was largely as expected and included an increase in the core allocation of 2.6%. The CEO then outlined the activities for which specific funding had been provided by the Department of Health in 2022.

The Board approved the HRB Budget for 2022 and key elements of the HRB Service Plan for 2022, the second year of the HRB Strategy 2021-2025, Health research – making an impact. It was agreed that the detailed HRB Service Plan 2022 would be presented to the Board at the next meeting.

7. Conflict of Interests Process and Template

The Chairperson introduced the revised procedure for preparing the Board members' Register of Interests and managing conflicts of interest that arise. Board members agreed to complete and return the forms to the Secretary, and she undertook to collate the information received and prepare a paper for consideration at the next meeting of the Board.

The Board approved the revised Framework for a Code of Business Conduct for Board and Board Committee Members incorporating a new conflict of interest process and template

8. Programme of Work for the Board

The Board noted the programme of work for the remainder of 2022.

9. HRB Rapid Response Mechanism to support Ukrainian researchers in crisis

Dr Maguire introduced a proposed response mechanism to integrate displaced Ukrainian researchers into Irish research and outlined how the efforts of Irish research funders are being coordinated nationally.

The Board approved a new "supplement" grant to provide opportunities for displaced health researchers from Ukraine to join existing HRB funded awards and to pursue their research in institutions in Ireland.

The Board delegated authority to the Executive Team to approve any awards made under this initiative.

10. Approval of panel recommendations on awards

National Integrated PhD Programme for Medical Practitioners 2022

Dr Montesanti introduced the scheme and outlined the application and review processes used. The observations of the review panel were discussed in detail. It was noted that an interim review would

be conducted at 18 months after the start of the Programme to assess specific metrics, followed by a second review after 36 months. In addition, the award is to be monitored via annual reporting including submission of financial information.

The Board approved funding for a National Integrated PhD Programme for Medical Practitioners for a period of eight years.

11. Other research funding matters

Research Programme - Former Residents of Mother and Baby Homes and Related Institutions

The Board noted the peer review process and subsequent engagements for the application submitted under the *Research Programme – Former Residents of Mother and Baby Homes and Related Institutions* and the conclusion that the proposed research programme is not feasible as envisaged.

The Board approved the close-out of the review process for this call and that the decision would be communicated with the Department of Health

Independent evaluation of TILDA

The Board noted the plan to commission an independent evaluation of the State's investment in TILDA to collate the outputs, outcomes and impacts and to act as an input to planned deliberations on future investment.

12. Other HRB publications

Problematic Opioid Use in Ireland 2015-2019

The Board approved the publication of the report: Problematic opiate use in Ireland 2015 – 2019

13. Corporate reporting

Procurement Reports

The Board noted the following:

- I. Between the period 01 November 2021 to 31 December 2021
 - a. Purchase Orders raised with a value more than €20,000
 - b. Contracts awarded between €25,000 and €75,000 (ex VAT)
 - c. Contracts approved by the Board more than €75,000 (ex VAT)
 - d. Authorised exceptions to the competitive procurement guidelines

HRB Board minutes 1 April 2022

- II. Between period 01 January 2021 to 31 December 2021
 - e. Supplier expenditure more than €25,000

Contracts valued at in excess of €75,000

The Board approved the award of a contract to McCann Fitzgerald LLP for the provision of Legal Services for the HRB and noted that the duration of the proposed contract would be for 24 months with options for two 12-month extensions. The maximum value of the proposed contract would be €205,000 excluding VAT.

14. Other governance matters

Proposal for the sale proceeds of the HRB's Baggot Street premises

The Board considered different options for utilising the proceeds of the sale of 73 Lower Baggot Street.

Policy on approval of Host Institutions

The Board noted the HRB's policy on approval of host institutions

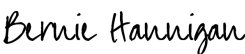
15. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was set for Friday 27st May 2022.

16. Executive Session of the Board

No decisions were taken during the executive session of the Board.



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Prof Bernie Hannigan (Chairperson)

Actions Arising from the Board Meeting of 1 April 2022

No.	Action
1.	The National Innovation Strategy to be an agenda item for the next meeting of the Board.
2.	CEO would provide an update at the next meeting on the filling of the post of Head of the National Office and steps being taken to clarify the governance arrangements and lines of accountability between the HRB, the NO and the Department of Health.
3.	HRB Service Plan 2022 to be tabled at the next meeting of the Board
4.	Secretary to collate the Register of Interests information received and prepare a paper for consideration at the next meeting of the Board.
5	Department of Health to be informed of decision by the Board to approve the close-out of the review process for the Research Programme – Former Residents of Mother and Baby Homes and Related Institutions