



PractitionerHealth
LOOKING AFTER YOUR WELLBEING IN CONFIDENCE

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Professor Frank Murray - Chairman Practitioner Health

Dear Colleagues,

As Chairman of the Board of Practitioner Health, I am pleased to present our 2025 Annual Report. The professional and enthusiastic commitment of all involved with Practitioner Health continues with an increase in the numbers of practitioners presenting to the service again this year. The importance of having a confidential, independent programme is evident and we are pleased to be able to offer such a service to our colleagues. Our aim is to be a low threshold, accessible service which can respond to a practitioner in a timely manner. We recognise that when someone contacts the programme, they can often present late and sometimes in crisis.

Practitioner Health is a registered charity and is fully compliant with the Charity Regulator requirements. Our accounts are audited on an annual basis. We are indebted to all our donors who continue to provide crucial financial support to the programme. This enables us to sustain the programme in its current format. As the service expands however and the clinical demand increases, we are working hard on developing a more sustainable funding model.

I would like to acknowledge and express my thanks to the outstanding commitment and skills of the Practitioner Health team delivering the service, so ably led by Dr Íde Delargy in her role as Medical Director.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Murray".

Professor Frank Murray MD
Chairman, Practitioner Health



MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr Íde Delargy - Medical Director Practitioner Health

Practitioner Health (PH) has always aimed to be a vital resource to our colleagues in distress.

In the medical, dental and pharmacy professions, delivering high-quality patient care is inextricably linked to the psychological safety of the clinicians providing it. As we review the operational and clinical achievements of Practitioner Health over the past year, we acknowledge that the health and resilience of our most vital asset, the practitioners themselves, is of paramount importance. Our patients repeatedly tell us how vital the service we provide is and, in some cases, how our intervention and support has been lifesaving.

Over the past year, we notice some common themes emerging in practitioners presenting to the programme. Far from being isolated incidents of individual practitioner burnout, these conditions can represent structural occupational hazards that require ongoing institutional monitoring, targeted interventions, and strategic resource allocation to practitioner wellbeing.

These distinct conditions can have a significant impact on the mental health of a practitioner:

Second Victim Syndrome (Acute Trauma): This condition remains a frequent challenge following unpredictable adverse clinical outcomes or medical errors. Practitioners involved in these distressing events often experience acute psychological trauma, profound guilt, and intense self-doubt. Left unmanaged, this syndrome leads to rapid professional isolation, clinical anxiety, and increased attrition which underscores the urgent need for immediate and appropriate non-punitive peer support.

Moral Injury (Chronic Systemic Distress): This is the deep psychological distress caused by failing to prevent, or bearing witness to actions that violate one's deeply held moral values or ethical codes. This distress is generally related to patient care but systemic failures can also be the driver for this condition. Interpersonal disputes with colleagues, bullying in the workplace to self or others, perceived unjust decisions or complaints can cause distress for an individual. Moral injury creates a deep sense of betrayal and existential exhaustion which as well as anxiety and depression, can leave a practitioner wanting to quit their work and leave the profession. This condition is usually not resolved by individual resilience training alone but rather demands structural and operational reforms. Being heard and being reassured is part of the recovery process.

Neurodiversity: Some practitioners present with a prior diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with some already taking medication to manage their symptoms. Others may be unaware they have either of these conditions and may present with mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety or substance misuse. In most cases there will be workplace issues or dysfunction of some kind. Late diagnosis can be a feature for practitioners: structured training requiring

regular evaluations and accountability often provides the scaffolding which allows them to function well. However, once these features are removed and independent functioning and decision making is required, sometimes things can fall apart. We are increasingly aware of the impact of neurodiversity on the individual practitioner and how they function in the workplace. As part of the initial assessment, we have introduced a screening tool for ADHD and estimate that about one third of the practitioners presenting will need further detailed assessment to establish a diagnosis of ADHD.

We have taken the opportunity to highlight these conditions in this annual report as we believe our institutions and regulators need to be aware of the profound effects these occupational stressors can have on the individual.

Activities throughout the year included delivering lectures to a variety of training bodies and trainees. In addition, the Trustee Board and the clinical team at PH were delighted to participate in a most informative medico-legal seminar which was organised and sponsored by Medisec. Members of the Senior Management Team of Medisec and legal experts in medical negligence spoke at the seminar. We are sincerely grateful to Medisec for hosting this seminar.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the team Dr Kieran O'Driscoll, and Dr Matt Lynch who have done outstanding work throughout 2025. I would also like to sincerely thank the Clinical Advisory Team which meets quarterly and provides further opinions, perspectives and advice on problem cases. I would also like to acknowledge the time commitment and effort of everyone involved.

I would like to thank Morgan Lucey, Director of the HSE Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) who has been a tremendous support to PH this year. He has taken a particular interest in our referrals and ensures they are allocated a therapist in a timely manner. We are also privileged to have a wonderful network of preferred therapists who are experienced and trusted.

I must give a special mention to our excellent Board of Trustees who steer the Practitioner Health programme with passion and prudence. I am indebted to their ongoing work and without the commitment, expertise and the support of this dedicated Board, the programme would not be as successful as it is.



Dr Íde Delargy
Medical Director, PHMP

ANALYSIS OF PRESENTATIONS TO PRACTITIONER HEALTH IN 2025

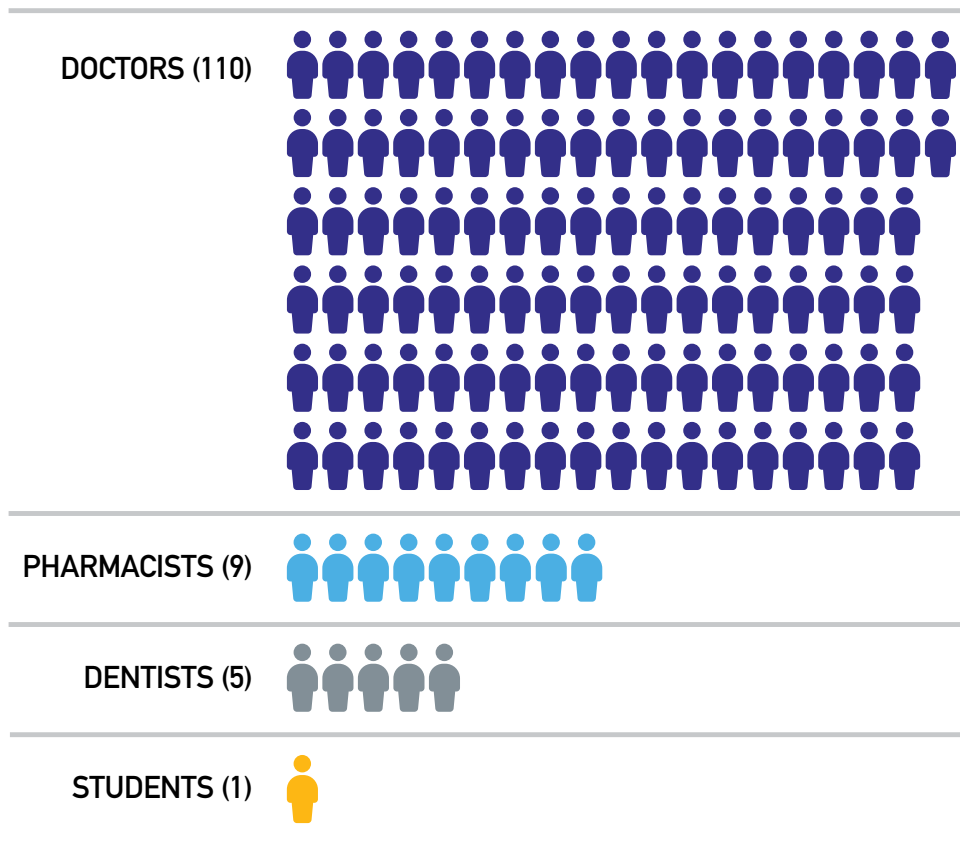
There were 126 new presentations to PH in 2025. In addition, 7 practitioners who had previously attended the programme contacted us again and re-engaged. At presentation, each person is assessed by one of the doctors on the PH team and a care plan is agreed with them. A range of treatment options are offered, including psychological supports, medication management, inpatient treatment or onward referral as appropriate to the individual's needs. The programme has developed a close working relationship with the HSE Employee Assistance Programme who provide psychological supports for any practitioner employed by the HSE. In addition, PH continues to expand its network of therapists around the country. These therapists are familiar with the nuances and complexities of working with practitioners. With the help of support from the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund, PH can offer free of charge therapy sessions depending on the financial needs of the patient.

It is noteworthy that practitioners attending the programme have very good outcomes.

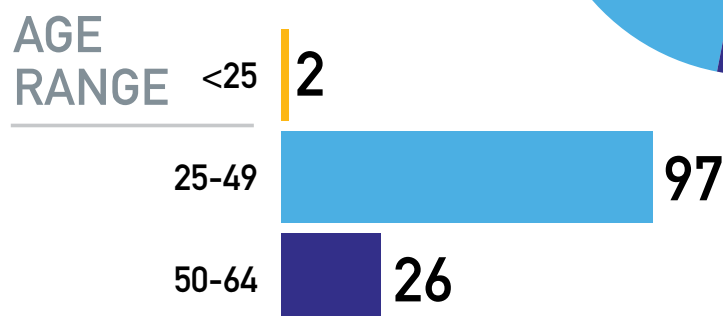
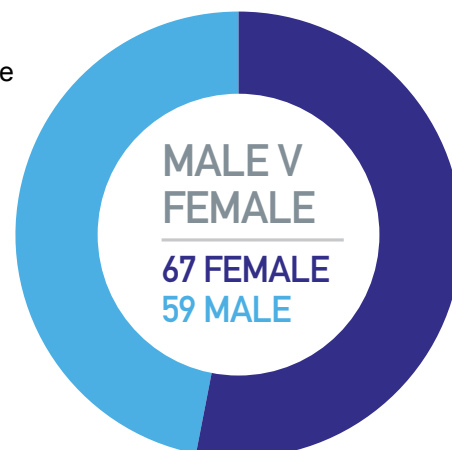
- Of the 126 new patients seen in 2025, 71 of the practitioners are currently working.
- 40 have been discharged from the Programme fit and well.
- 30 practitioners who needed to take time off work are now back to work healthy and well.
- 15 of the new patients are currently out of work.
- 1 practitioner has retired from practice since attending the PH programme
- 1 attendee was a medical student
- 8 practitioners were either lost to follow up or DNA.

Most of the new presentations (110) in 2025 were from doctors. This reflects the increasing awareness of the service amongst the medical profession as well as signposting from the training bodies, occupational health, GPs and the Irish Medical Council.

PRESENTATIONS BY OCCUPATION 2025 PRESENTATION

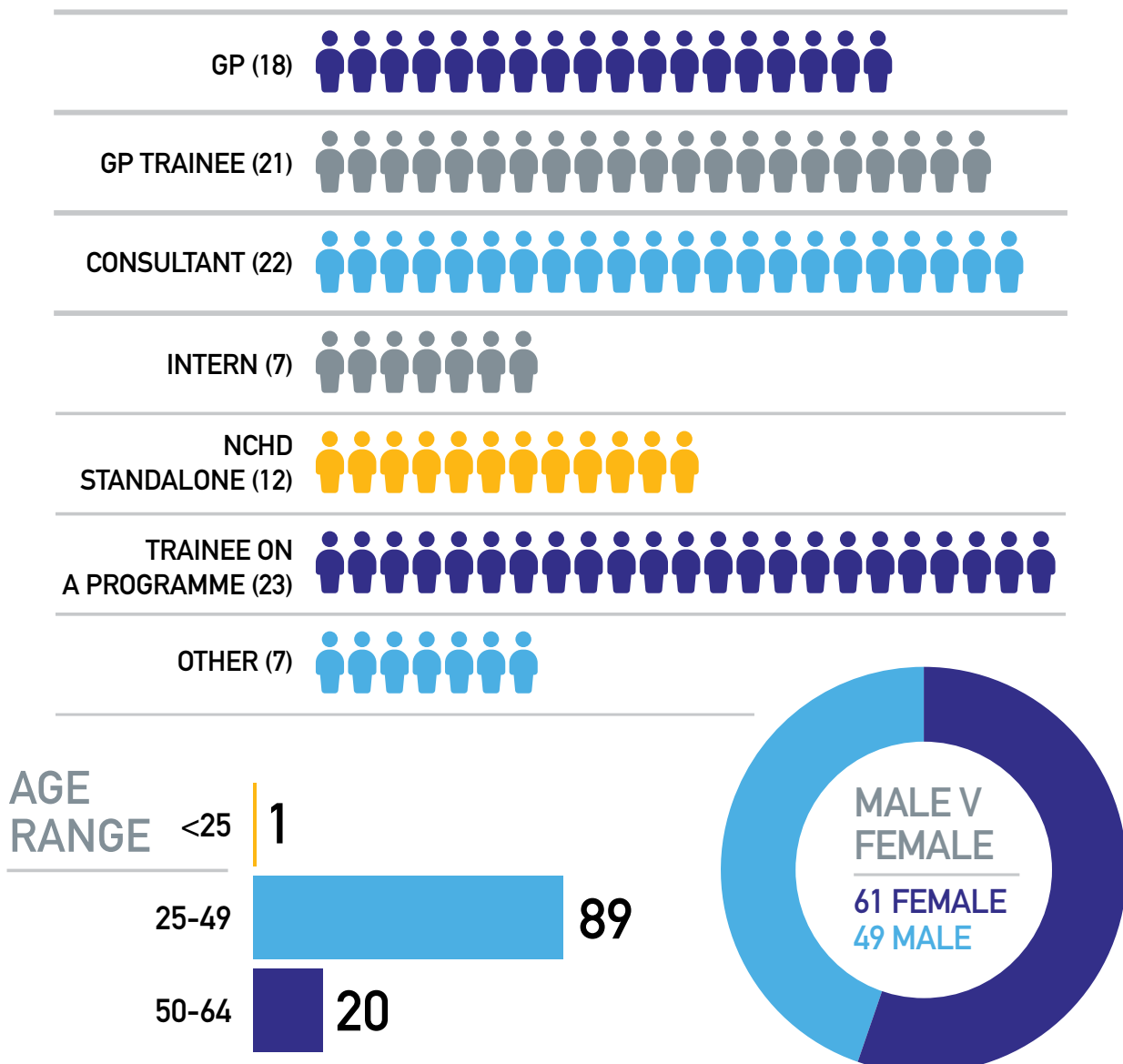


As has been the case in previous years, there were more females presenting than males and the age profile reflect a younger age cohort.



NEW DOCTOR REFERRALS

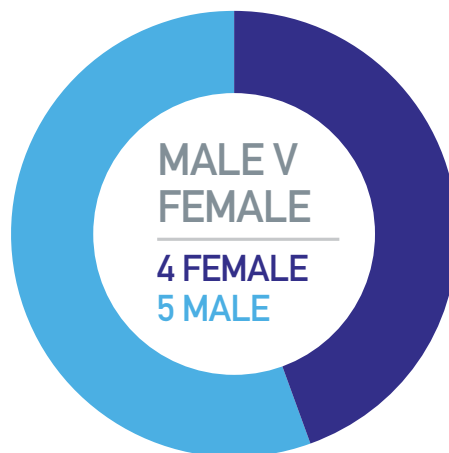
As in previous years, 89 doctors were in the younger age category (25-49 years) and this cohort seems to particularly benefit from our support and guidance at this phase of their careers. While we acknowledge that supports are provided by the various training schemes, the intern support programme as well as Occupational Health and the Employee Assistance Programme as well as the practitioner's own GP particularly to the younger cohort of doctors, some doctors prefer the option of availing of support from our confidential programme. In 2025 40 more senior doctors presented to the programme, both consultants and general practitioners. We believe affording a discrete and confidential service for more senior clinicians is essential as this cohort can often find it difficult to seek help and to find a safe place to disclose whatever is troubling them. Of the new Doctor presentations this year, 8 are also attending the Health Committee of the Medical Council and are reviewed regularly by the team in PH.



NEW PHARMACIST REFERRALS 2025

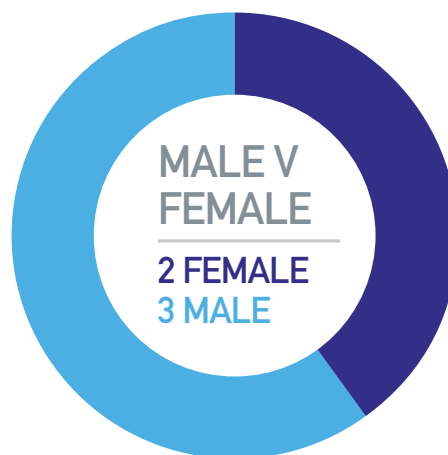
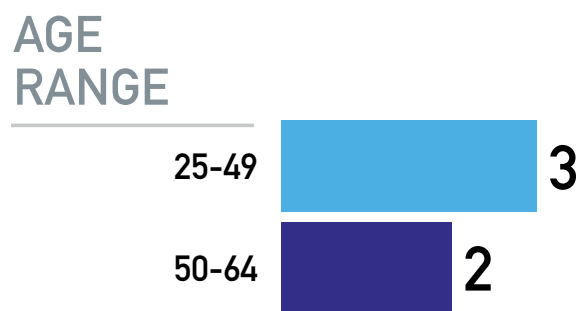
Pharmacist presentations in 2025 are up slightly but remain low at 9 new presentations. We are working with the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland in order to improve communication and raise awareness about the programme. Our message is to encourage pharmacists to present early and not to wait until an issue is referred to the regulator. There remains significant work to be done on raising awareness of the programme as well as reassuring pharmacists about the confidentiality of the service.

AGE RANGE



NEW DENTIST REFERRALS 2025

The number of dentists presenting remains very low as has been the case in previous years. Five dentists came forward for support in 2025. Although the reports in the literature would suggest higher levels of stress and mental health issues amongst dentists when compared to the general public this does not appear to manifest in dentists seeking help with these issues. This is something that would warrant further investigation to understand what the barriers to seeking help might be. We acknowledge the regular communication from the various dental bodies about the programme and encourage ongoing messaging through social media and all other channels.



TESTIMONIALS

"I am writing to thank you from the bottom of my heart as I find myself getting healed in stages. Every time I visit you, I get closer to accepting my past, understanding my triggers and the impact these triggers have on me."

"You will never know how deeply grateful I am for your kind listening ear from my very first appointment with you. It is great to have that feeling of support, I don't feel so alone now."

"Thank you for the warm, prompt and welcome support."

"I can't find the words to express my deepest gratitude to the incredible team at the Practitioner Health Matters Programme. Your compassion, support, and guidance were my lifeline during one of the most difficult times in my life. You helped me navigate through the darkness and I'm forever grateful. If you're a doctor struggling, please reach out to PHMP - they will wrap you in support, guide you with kindness and advocate for you tirelessly. Thank you for being my beacon of hope."

"An Exceptional Doctor Who Helped Me Rebuild My Life In 2023, I found myself caught in the trap of alcohol dependence. It was one of the most difficult periods of my life. I felt completely lost, both personally and professionally, and at the time I struggled to see a way forward. That changed when I learned about the PHMP and came under the care of Dr Delargy.

From the beginning, Dr Delargy treated me with compassion, dignity and understanding, without judgement. She did far more than simply advise me to stop drinking. She helped put the right support around me, including access to a psychologist, regular follow-ups and practical guidance on maintaining abstinence. She also helped me recognise and address important factors such as workplace stress, burnout and the need to look after my wellbeing in the long term. What made her care so valuable was that it was not focused only on getting through a crisis. She helped me understand how to build a stable, sustainable life in recovery. Her regular check-ins provided accountability and reassurance, while her encouragement gave me confidence at a time when I had very little confidence in myself.

Over time, my life changed completely. I regained my health, stability, purpose and professional ambition. I was able to move forward with my career, enter BST training and ultimately pass my membership examinations-achievements that once seemed almost impossible during the darkest period of 2023.

Looking back at where I was then and where I am today, the difference is extraordinary. Dr Delargy and the PHMP played a hugely important role in that journey.

I will always be deeply grateful to Dr Delargy for her professionalism, compassion, patience and unwavering support. She did not simply help me achieve abstinence; she helped me rebuild my life and believe in my future again. For any healthcare professional who finds themselves struggling and feels that there is no clear way forward, I cannot speak highly enough of Dr Delargy and the support provided through the PHMP. Sometimes the right professional support at the right time can genuinely change the direction of a person's life. For me, it did."

CASE HISTORIES

■ CONSULTANT

A male recently appointed consultant had an adverse event which caused him to ruminate excessively about the case as well as other cases he had dealt with during his career to date. Unable to sleep, he was exhausted and anxious. Became fearful of making other mistakes and suffered a huge loss of confidence in his abilities. Eventually he wanted to quit his career as his ruminations and obsessional re review of cases was impacting on his wife and family also. A friend advised him to seek help and with the help of PH and following regular reviews and engagement with the programme, he is now back at work in a healthier state of mind.

■ TRAINEE

A female GP trainee who had severe anxiety. She had missed time on her training programme as a result and was further impacted by having to extend her training time. She required ongoing support from PH which included medication but importantly helped her to assess what were the contributory factors to her anxiety. Poor self-esteem as well as unresolved issues in her family of origin and fear of uncertainty were all relevant factors. These issues were explored through therapy and regular reviews in PH. By her own assessment she is feeling much better and coping better with the day to day challenges of being a general practitioner. She is now working well with no absences from work and feeling more confident in her own abilities.

■ TRAINEE

A male, HST trainee with an alcohol problem. He was noticed to have a smell of alcohol on his breath at work and was stood down immediately. He was referred to PH for support. He admitted drinking to excess and his problem drinking had escalated in the past 6 months due to a family dispute which had upset him greatly. His perspective was that as he never drank at work was only drinking in the evenings he initially did not accept that he had a problem. Initially his insight was poor but over time he realised that he needed to comply with the programme of abstinence and co-operate with providing screening tests which verified his abstinence. Once that was achieved, he was able to return to the workplace. Ongoing monitoring continues which confirms his abstinence and he is doing well.

■ PHARMACIST

A female later career pharmacist who self-referred to PH. She had multiple problems in her home environment which led to insomnia and a sense of overwhelm. Through ongoing discussions with

PH, she realised the extent of previous trauma in her background and how this impacted on her mental health. Practical, supportive advice with an empathic listening ear helped this lady to address the issues which were causing her distress. Basic advice such as a good routine with exercise and good sleep hygiene helped significantly in this lady's recovery plan.

■ DENTIST

A male mid-career dentist attended following a complaint made about him to the Dental Council. He was extremely diligent and perfectionistic and he felt the nature of the complaint was entirely unjust. He was already feeling low in himself and the complaint tipped him into a depression. He had lost all enjoyment in life, was sleeping poorly and catastrophising about the outcome of the complaint. He feared losing his license and never working again. At times he felt suicidal and believed his family would be better off if he wasn't around. At PH he was assessed as being depressed as well as scoring positive on ADHD screening. He was treated for depression to very good effect. He also had a full ADHD assessment and commenced on treatment. He continues to be seen regularly and reports feeling the best he has been in many years.

PLEASE NOTE THESE CASE HISTORIES HAVE BEEN ALTERED IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL



THE BOARD OF PRACTITIONER HEALTH WISH TO THANK ALL OUR SUPPORTERS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE RUNNING OF THE SERVICE IN MANY WAYS AND IN PARTICULAR OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS.

OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS INCLUDE:

CHALLENGE INSURANCE	IRISH MEDICAL COUNCIL
CLANWILLIAM HEALTH	IRISH MEDICAL ORGANISATION
COLLEGE OF ANAESTHESIOLOGY IRELAND	COLLEGE OF OPHTHALMOLOGISTS
COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRY	IRISH PHARMACY UNION
DENTAL COUNCIL	MEDICAL PROTECTION SOCIETY
DENTAL BENEVOLENT FUND	DENTAL PROTECTION SOCIETY
DENTAL HOSPITAL	MEDISEC
HSE/NDTP	SHEPPARD TRUST
IRISH COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS	ROYAL COLLEGE PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND
IRISH DENTAL ASSOCIATION	ROYAL COLLEGE SURGEONS IN IRELAND
IRISH HOSPITAL CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION	MEDICAL BENEVOLENT FUND SOCIETY OF IRELAND

We also received individual donations from practitioners for which we are very grateful.

The Board acknowledges the work of the Medical Director Dr Íde Delargy and our administrator Ms Sarah Keegan with assistance from Ms Katherine Madden all of whom have played a vital role in supporting the service. We also acknowledge the support and dedication of the Clinical Advisory Group who all give generously of their time and expertise.

PROF FRANK MURRAY CHAIRMAN	PROF KEVIN CONLON TRUSTEE
MS SIOBHAN KELLY HONORARY SECRETARY	MR EAMON CROKE TRUSTEE
MR JOHN O'CONNOR HONORARY TREASURER	MS SUSAN CLYNE TRUSTEE
MR FINTAN HOURIHAN TRUSTEE	MS KATHERINE MORROW TRUSTEE
DR NOEL KAVANAGH TRUSTEE	DR PAUL ARMSTRONG TRUSTEE
DR ANNE DOHERTY TRUSTEE	

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Name	Practitioner Health
Registered Address	41 Main Street Blackrock Co Dublin
Registration Numbers	
Company Registration Number	529820
Registered Charity Number	20200787
Revenue Charity Number	21035
Auditors	DHKN Limited Galway Financial Services Centre Moneenageisha Road Galway
Bankers	Allied Irish Banks PLC Blackrock Co. Dublin
Solicitors	O'Connor Solicitors 8 Clare Street Dublin 2
Contact Details	Practitioner Health Matters 41 Main Street Blackrock Co Dublin 085 760 1274 confidential@practitionerhealth.ie www.practitionerhealth.ie

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