



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte  
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +  
Social Care Professionals

# Health and Social Care Professionals Council

## Statement of Strategy 2013-2016



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## Executive Summary

Protection of the public and, in particular, patient/service user safety and welfare is central to our mission. As the only multi-profession regulator in the country, we are responsible for ensuring that a wide range of health and social care professions operate to the highest standards. We are now publishing this draft Statement of Strategy for consultation to seek the views of all our stakeholders including the general public, members of the professions under our remit, representative bodies for the professions and government.

Following this consultation period, the Council of CORU will finalise our strategy and submit it to the Minister for Health. Once approved, the Statement of Strategy will provide the basis for a detailed annual business plans until 2016, aimed at delivering agreed strategic objectives.

This is our second Statement of Strategy and sets out how we intend to deliver on our mission over the next three years to the end of 2016. In preparing this draft Statement of Strategy we have already undertaken extensive consultation with our stakeholders. This process, for example, refined our vision and values, clarified key external factors likely to impact on our ability to deliver on our mission and identified a number of strategic challenges as a result.

The purposes of this Statement of Strategy are:

- Firstly to consolidate the progress made since the establishment of CORU and the release of our first Statement of Strategy
- Secondly, to provide a roadmap for the continuing rollout of the regulatory framework across the professions under our remit
- Thirdly, to ensure that CORU as an organisation is fit-for-purpose and can deliver on its remit in an effective and efficient manner.

As you read this document you'll note that it moves from the general to the specific.

Section 1 introduces CORU, how we are organised, our role and the respective roles and responsibilities of the constituent parts of our organisation.

Section 2 sets out our mission, vision and values. Together these provide the strategic direction of our organisation and the 'lens' through which we set our objectives and priorities.

Section 3 then sets out our Strategy in context. Firstly, we give an overview of the substantial progress made since the publication of our first Statement of Strategy. We then set out a number of factors in our environment likely to impact on how we operate. Arising from these and the need to ensure that CORU as an organisation is fit-for-purpose over the long-term, we identified a number of strategic challenges. Each challenge is outlined and we then set strategic objectives in response. These represent the specific strategic priorities for CORU over the next three years. Table 1 below summarises these challenges and objectives. Finally, a number of factors upon which the success of our Strategy depends are highlighted.

Section 4 concludes the document. The Appendix provides a glossary of terms used in the document, a summary of the planning process and consultation to-date together with an overview of the designated professions under our remit. We do reserve the right to revisit this Statement of Strategy in 2015, to assist us in dealing with any new developments and resourcing issues that could arise.

<p><b>Challenge 1: Delivery on our mandate to protect the public requires expeditious roll-out of the regulatory framework</b></p>	<p>Strategic Objective 1: To achieve complete roll-out of the regulatory regime across all professions under our remit, including registration, educational review and fitness to practise</p> <p>Strategic Objective 2: To complete the transition to include the Opticians Board under our remit</p> <p>Strategic Objective 3: Rollout the Fitness To Practise framework promptly once the respective professional Registers are open</p> <p>Strategic Objective 4: To be consistent in our approach and flexible where necessary while ensuring a regulatory framework that delivers on our remit.</p>
<p><b>Challenge 2: Meet the developing needs of a diverse and changing national demographic.</b></p>	<p>Strategic Objective 5: To ensure CORU has the necessary capabilities and systems to successfully implement regulation in a demographically diverse and changing state, noting the changes that will impact on the demands for services of the health and social care professions.</p>
<p><b>Challenge 3: Keep up-to-date with developments across the professions and ensuring regulation reflects best international practice</b></p>	<p>Strategic Objective 6: Continue to build our national and international networks to facilitate knowledge sharing and feed learning into the regulatory regime.</p>
<p><b>Challenge 4: Finance and resource constraints will impact CORU's ability to deliver on its mission</b></p>	<p>Strategic Objective 7: To continue to build a high performing organisation that is fit for purpose</p> <p>Strategic Objective 8: To minimise the cost of regulation while delivering on our mandate</p> <p>Strategic Objective 9: To ensure an ICT infrastructure that is flexible, cost-effective and highly performing.</p>
<p><b>Challenge 5: Delivery of CORU's work depends heavily on voluntary service on Council and Registration Boards</b></p>	<p>Strategic Objective 10: To ensure that there is sufficient commitment, involvement and contribution from members and support for their work in order to successfully implement regulation.</p>

<p><b>Challenge 6:</b>  <b>Build stakeholder confidence in the work of CORU through effective communication</b></p>	<p>Strategic Objective 11: To effectively communicate by ensuring that our communications meet the specific needs of each of our stakeholder constituencies</p> <p>Strategic Objective 12: Promotion of CORU’s purpose, vision and operation amongst key stakeholders, especially the public and the designated professions</p>
<p><b>Challenge 7:</b>  <b>Ensure that CORU embodies best practices in organisational leadership and governance</b></p>	<p>Strategic Objective 13: Continue to implement high standards of corporate governance and operational effectiveness.</p>

## 1. Introduction

This document is the second Statement of Strategy for the Health and Social Care Professionals Council (Council) (CORU), the first having covered the three-year period 2010-12. We are seeking to build on the progress to-date and provide direction for our future work.

This Statement of Strategy is intended to convey our clarity of purpose, a shared understanding of the challenges facing our organisation, how we intend to meet those challenges and our relative priorities in doing so.

Implementation of this strategy is supported by annual business and operational plans.

### 1.1 About Us

#### A Modern Approach to Regulation

CORU is in a unique position as Ireland's only multi-profession health regulator, working in the public interest. Our role is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence through statutory registration of health and social care professionals. Regulation and assurance of high professional standards are particularly important for the public, given the potential vulnerability of service users who may access services on a short-term and occasional basis, or on a more long-term, ongoing basis.

CORU is the brand name and logo under which the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the Registration Boards for the professions collectively operate. Our legal name remains the Health and Social Care Professionals Council. CORU has been introduced to allow for ease of recognition by the public, potential registrants and the general health and social services. CORU is derived from the Irish word "coir" which means fair, just and proper.

CORU is charged with, and is accountable for, the regulation of 12 health and social care professions, constituting an estimated 20,000 members. For the first time, these professions will now be regulated on a statutory basis. They are:

Clinical biochemists	Orthoptists	Radiographers
Dietitians	Podiatrists	Social care workers
Medical scientists	Physiotherapists	Social workers
Occupational therapists	Psychologists	Speech and language therapists

In addition, the Opticians Board which regulates Dispensing Opticians and Optometrists will be dissolved and its functions transferred to CORU. There is provision in the legislation to extend

its remit over time through the addition of further professions. The Minister for Health has also publically committed to the regulation of Counsellors and Psychotherapists under CORU's remit.

CORU is an independent statutory body established under the aegis of the Health & Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended), whose parent government department is the Department of Health. We were the first such body established with a lay majority, thus putting the citizen at the heart of how we perform our role. Other government Departments and agencies are also key partners and stakeholders, and they play a significant role in influencing and supporting CORU's aims and operations.

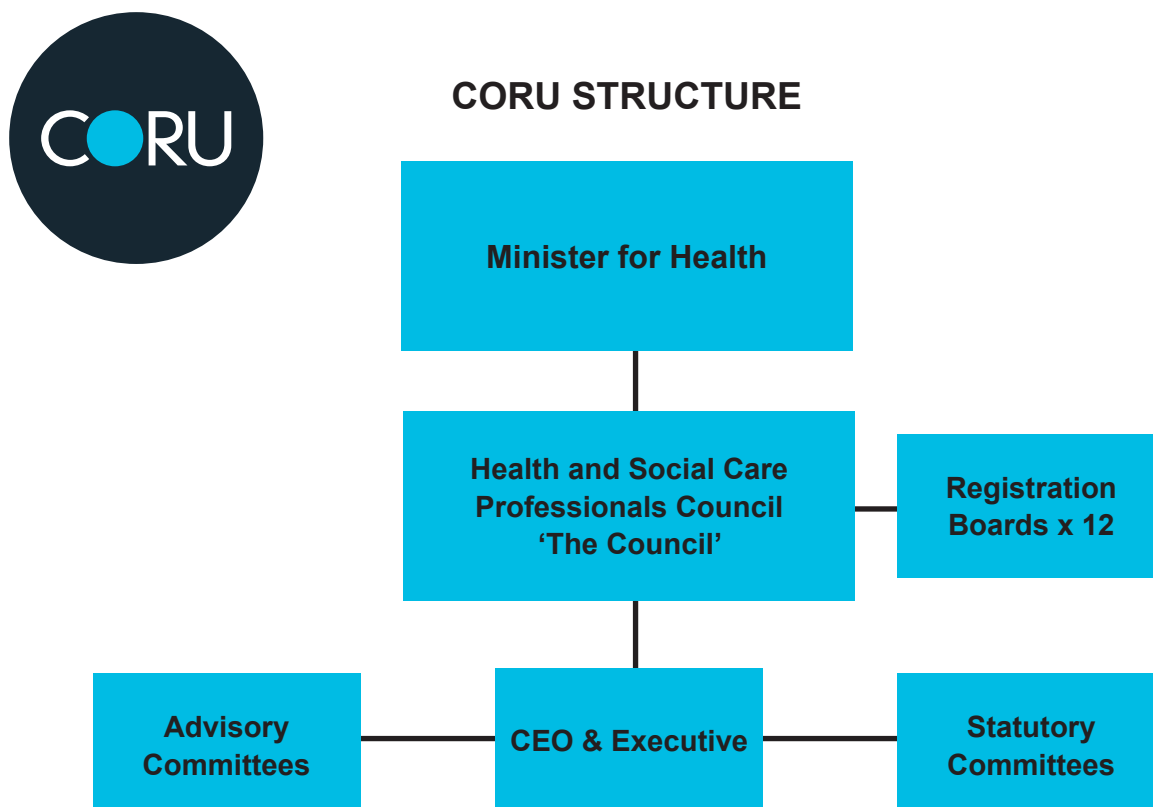
This statutory framework facilitates:

- a greater confidence for the general public in the designated professions under our remit
- an enhanced standing of members of the professions
- a consistent approach to regulation across the professions.

## A Unique, Multi-Disciplinary Organisation

In order to support Council in its role to regulate such a breadth of professions, we have built an organisation with the necessary capabilities to deliver on our strategy. It is unique and multi-disciplinary in nature. It is capable of adapting to a dynamic, complex environment while delivering its services in a modern, transformational manner.

### 1.2 Organisation and Governance





## Council - Role and Responsibilities

Our mandate is “to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among registrants of the designated professions.” (Section 7 of the Health & Social Care Professionals Act, 2005)

We:

- oversee and co-ordinate the work of the Registration Boards
- enforce standards of practice for registered professionals including codes of professional conduct and ethics
- operate Fitness to Practise
- make decisions and give directions relating to disciplinary sanctions on registrants
- allocate resources in an efficient and effective way.

Council has 25 members - one nominated from each regulated profession and 13 lay members. The lay members are drawn from the education sector, patient and service user advocacy groups, the voluntary sector and representatives of public and private sector organisations who are concerned with health and social care. The Chairperson is part of the lay majority.

Four committees of Council provide specific expertise and advice to the Council and the Executive in the following areas:

- Finance and resources
- Audit, risk and governance
- Registration and education
- Fitness to practise regime.

## Registration Boards Role and Responsibilities

Each profession has its own Registration Board which is responsible for the registration of members of their respective profession, and for fostering high standards of professional conduct, education and training among registrants. Bodies corporate in their own right, they will make, with Council approval, bye-laws in respect of their registration and education functions.

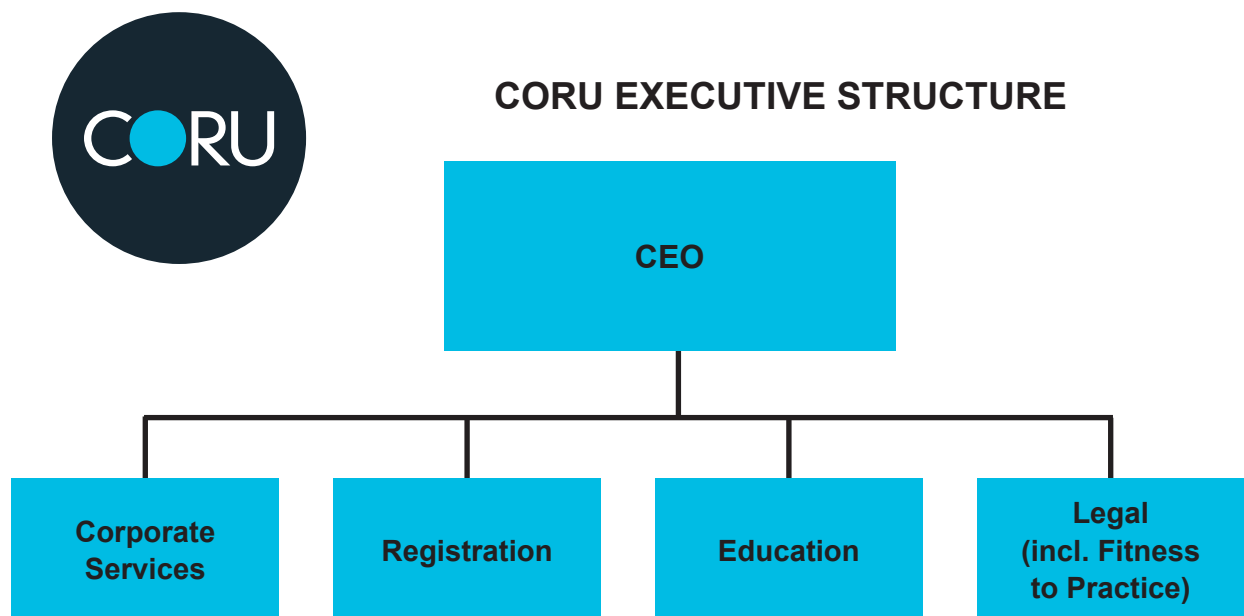
The separation of functions between Council and the Registration Boards has the benefit of ensuring that each profession to be regulated will have a dedicated body that focuses solely on that profession thus ensuring input from specific professional expertise.

Each Registration Board is responsible for:

- establishing and maintaining the Register of members of that profession
- approving and monitoring education and training programmes relevant for entry to the Register
- setting the code of professional conduct and ethics
- setting the requirements for continuing professional development
- assessing and recognising qualifications gained outside the State.

Each of the Boards will consist of 13 unpaid members appointed by the Minister for Health; seven non-elected members represent the citizen as lay members of the Board, with one each coming from the education sector, public employers and private/voluntary agencies; as well as six members from the respective professions representing educators, managers and providers of services. When all Registration Boards are established for the professions, there will be a total of 156 Board members. Each Board is required to meet at least four times per year, but typically meet 10 times a year to ensure the progression of the registration of its profession.

## Role of the Executive



The CEO and Executive are responsible for research and policy development in relation to the regulation of health and social care professions and for building and maintaining the Register of professions. The Executive liaises with the Department in relation to health policy and on-going development of relevant health legislation. The Executive also provides administrative support for Council, the Committees of Council and the Registration Boards.

The Executive currently have a staff of 19 across four functions.

**Corporate Services** has responsibility for human resource management, information and communications technology, financial management, procurement, corporate governance, internal audit, risk management, external communications, secretariat to Council and the Registration Boards, induction and training of members, customer service, data protection, facilities and resource planning. We also administer the election of members to the Registration Boards.

**Registration** has responsibility for the processing of registration applications on behalf of the Registration Boards including: verification of applications, vetting of applicants and managing assessments of professional competence. We also maintain the Registers, process international applications for recognition of qualifications. We develop policy with regard to criteria for registration, restoration, and returning to practice.

**Education** has responsibility for educational assessment and conduct of the educational approval process including, review of submissions and site audits. We also develop policy with regard to educational criteria and standards for approval as well as the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) frameworks for each of the professions.

**Legal Affairs** has responsibility for developing policy on the implementation of Fitness to Practise and will be responsible for managing the Fitness to Practise process from the receipt of complaints, through their initial screening by a Preliminary Proceedings Committee, to investigation and hearing by a Professional Conduct or Health Committee, and finally to Council deciding on sanction and implementing sanction following High Court review. Legal Affairs have developed the framework for the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics. They also advise the Executive, Council and the Registration Boards on implementation of the legislation, legislative amendments, conduct of appeals, drafting of bye-laws for registration boards and the rules for Council.

They are developing and will operate a prosecutions regime for people using the professional title without being registered. Legal Affairs also provide any other legal advice required including advice on contractual arrangements.

## 2. Strategic Direction for CORU

Our mission, vision and values provide strategic direction for CORU. They guide our decision-making and inform the allocation of resources to achieve our objectives. The object or mission of CORU is set in law by the 2005 Act. Based on our mission and in consultation with our stakeholders we have defined the following vision and values.

### 2.1 Our Mission

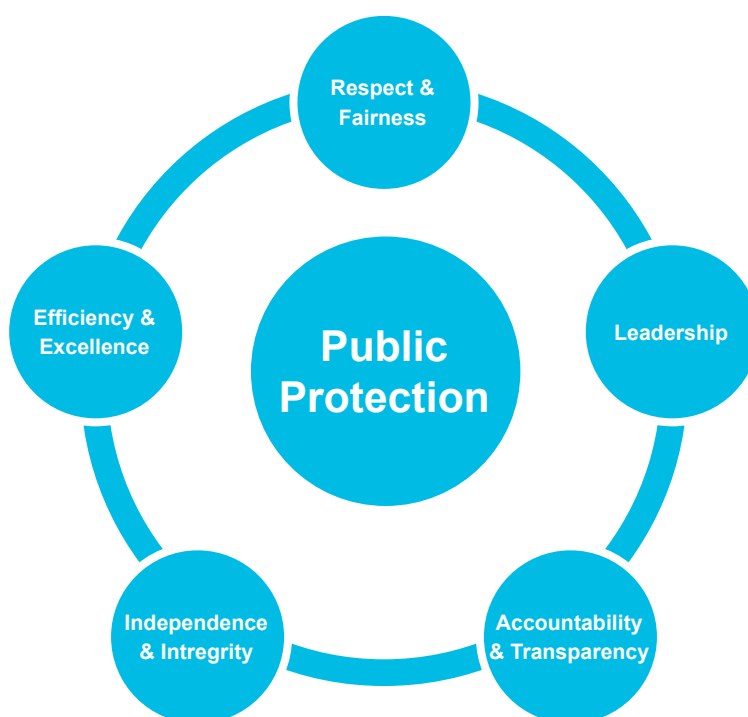
**To protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among registrants of the designated professions**

(Section 7 of the Health & Social Care Professionals Act 2005)

### 2.2 Our Vision

**Public confidence and protection is secured by CORU's promotion of high standards through fair and effective regulation of Health and Social Care professionals.**

### 2.3 Our Values



CORU seeks to reflect a set of values that underpin and support the way we work and interact with all our stakeholders. The following values are central to the fulfilment of our mission and vision:

All our decisions, actions and priorities are based on our single focus, to enhance the **protection of the public**, who are our partners and main stakeholders.

We demonstrate **leadership** within our sector through a positive, quality and evidence-based approach to our work.

We commit to **accountability and transparency** in all our processes; decisions, professional conduct, communications and dealings with our stakeholders.

We show **respect and fairness** in our interactions with the public, professionals and all our stakeholders.

We demonstrate **effectiveness and excellence** as an organisation in terms of value for money, efficiency of operations and governance.

We demonstrate **independence and integrity** in all our dealings with our stakeholders.

### 3. Context to our Strategy

In setting our strategic objectives we considered a number of contextual factors. Firstly, we reviewed the progress made against our first Statement of Strategy. Secondly, we identified those factors in our operating environment, both internally and externally, to which we need to respond.

Based on this work we then identified the key strategic challenges facing CORU and what our response should be. Finally, we set out several key success factors. These represent the critical assumptions that underpin our objectives and upon which our Strategy depends.

#### 3.1 Achievements to date

Much has been achieved since the establishment of our first Council in 2007 and during the three-year period of the first CORU Statement of Strategy 2010-2012 in each of following priority areas:

- Organisation Development and Support Systems
- Registration
- Education
- Fitness to Practise
- Governance & Leadership.

Our main objective – to protect the public – is at the heart of everything we do. The following summary information illustrates our key successes to-date.

## Registration

### Registers Open

- The **Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB)** was established in June 2010 (members appointed in August 2010) and opened its register on 31st May 2011, completing the transition period on 31 May 2013. Over 3,600 registration applications have been received to date.
- The **SWRB** has made a number of statutory instruments since it was established:
  - Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers Bye-Law 2011
  - Application for Registration of Social Workers Bye-Law 2011
  - Approved Qualifications for Social Workers Bye-Law 2011
  - Election of Members for Appointment to Social Workers Registration Board Bye-Law 2012
  - Returners to Practice bye-law 2013.
- The **SWRB** has approved nine qualifications for entry to the Register and monitors all the education and training programmes for social work every two years with a full review at least once every five years
- The **Radiographers Registration Board (RRB)** was established in December 2011 (members appointed in January 2012) and opened its Register (planned before end 2013). The Radiographers Register is the first to contain divisions. It allows radiographers and radiation therapists to register under the one Registration Board. The RRB has made the following bye-laws in preparing to open its Register:
  - Application for Registration bye-law 2013
  - Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Radiographers bye-law 2013
  - Approved qualifications and Divisions of the Register bye-law 2013.

### Registration Boards working towards opening their Registers

- The **Speech and Language Therapists Registration Board, Occupational Therapists Registration Board and Dietitians Registration Boards** were established in February 2013. They are progressing with setting the requirements for entry to their Register, developing their respective codes of professional conduct and ethics including standards of performance and are considering the qualifications and education and training programmes for approval for entry to their Registers.

## Registration Boards to be appointed

- The **Physiotherapist Registration Board** is due to be appointed by the Minister. CORU have also requested the Minister to appoint the Social Care Workers, Medical Scientists and Clinical Biochemists Registration Boards.

## Council's role in Registration

- An appeals mechanism for when a registration board decides to refuse registration has been set and is in place. These appeals will be considered by Council
- In 2012, Council made Rules on Time limits for payment of annual fees for retention of registration following public consultation.

## Education

- Council has developed generic criteria and standards of proficiency as a framework for use by each registration board. These standards describe for the first time common proficiencies across a diverse range of health and social care professions that are required for statutory registration. The standards of proficiency have been tailored to meet the needs of the professions by the five boards established to date
- A robust system for approving and monitoring education and training programmes has been established with eight programmes approved by end of 2013
- Following an extensive consultation exercise a Continuing Professional Development Model has been developed which will be used by the Registration Boards in setting their requirements for continuous professional development for their professions.

## Fitness to Practise

- The Fitness to Practise Model as set out in the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended), is being developed by Council in preparation for the commencement of Part 6 of our legislation
- The new regime will ensure that CORU can receive and deal with complaints fairly about conduct or competence of registrants
- A Framework Code of Conduct & Ethics has been developed which has formed the basis of Codes across the designated professions.



## Governance & Leadership

- 14 professions have agreed the framework that will be used by each Registration Board as the basis for making bye-laws on;
  - Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics
  - Education Approval and Monitoring system
  - Continuing Professional Development and
  - Application requirements.
- We devised a mechanism to ensure the effective working of a Council with individual Registration Boards, who have separate and distinct powers, in a cohesive manner. The corporate governance, support structures and systems are now in place to meet the needs of this unique model with multiple individual bodies' corporate under one agency
- We continue to engage with international and other national regulators to keep abreast of international/national models of regulation
- We continue to build relationships with our stakeholders – Department of Health, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, HSE and employers, educators, professional bodies, patient/ service user representative groups and trade unions.

## Organisation Development and Support Systems

- Council has appointed an Executive and created the organisation structure with the necessary systems and procedures to deliver on our core objective as we progress the regulation of the professions
- We have developed a brand and organisational identity, supported by the establishment of our website, production of publications and our active engagement with stakeholders
- The National Social Work Qualifications Board was dissolved in March 2011 and its assets and liabilities transferred to us
- We are continuing to work with the Department of Health in relation to the dissolution of the Opticians Board and the transfer of registration of Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians to CORU
- We have built efficient and effective organisation structures to deliver our mandate by maximising shared services, and the use of public service tendering and outsourcing
- Professionals can apply for registration, renew their registration and manage their details online. This comprehensive online system reflects CORU's drive towards greater efficiency in all its processes
- The public can access all of our Registers online, the first being the Social Workers Register.

## 3.2 Our Operating Environment

An essential consideration in preparing our Strategy was to review recent developments in our operating environment and to identify key trends likely to have a significant impact on our work. The strategy development process provided valuable insight and as a result, a number of important strategic drivers are summarised below. These provide direction for the setting of our strategic priorities and objectives within the framework of our founding and EU legislation.

### There is a drive to build a ‘Culture of Patient Safety’ and reform the health system

The creation of CORU can be seen in the context of a series of reforms aimed at delivering an increased focus on patient and service user safety and welfare within the health system. The establishment of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) and the updating of the legislation for the Medical Council, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland and the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, all focusing on improving safe services and safe professionals to deliver the services to the public. The broader reform agenda in the sector is set out in the government’s **Future Health: A Strategic Framework for Reform of the Health Service 2012-2015** with the following changes identified:

- the development of six hospital groups nationally, amalgamating the existing 49 acute hospitals together, ultimately moving to a hospital trust system, with the emphasis on “the money following the patient” principle;
- an additional Single hospital group for Children;
- a Purchaser-Provider split which will reform the way funding of the provision of services is carried out; and
- a separate Children and Family Services, which was previously embedded within the Health Service Executive and will answer to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

We are committed to promoting a high quality of patient/service user care by fostering high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence among the regulated professions. As a statutory regulator, CORU will be called on to play an increasingly important role in helping ensure that health and social care professionals deliver high quality and safe care.

Greater focus on public protection and welfare reinforces public confidence in their health and social care professionals. There is a demand for transparency with regard to issues relating to public protection. It is important that patient/service user safety and welfare is at the heart of CORU’s strategy. Having a combination of both health and social care professionals and members of the public sitting on the Council and the individual Registration Boards brings a broader perspective and experience to the regulation of health and social care professionals.

## **There is growing public expectation of the highest standards of regulation**

Both the reform agenda and concerns over the provision of health care in recent years have raised public awareness of the need to improve standards of care. With a greater focus on and an increased public understanding of patient/service user safety and welfare, there is greater expectation of healthcare regulators, as the safeguard of the public interest. There is also a greater expectation among the public that statutory bodies will carry out their functions in an efficient, cost-effective and transparent manner.

Technological and societal changes, such as the use of social media, are driving greater demands for accessibility, speed of response, transparency and accountability in government. In the context of all of these factors, CORU must seek to inform the public about its work and demonstrate, through its actions, that it is an organisation capable of fulfilling its statutory remit and meeting the public's expectation.

## **A demographically different Ireland increases the complexity of our operating environment**

Ireland has undergone a demographic transformation over the last decade. Increasing diversity is reflected not only in the general public but also in the health system itself. As the workforce becomes more diverse and inclusive it is imperative that CORU's strategy takes cognisance of these changes and reflects any issues that may occur as a result.

The rising proportion of older citizens on the one hand, and births on the other, pose challenges for service delivery. From the perspective of our remit, the impact of this change is likely to see a greater role for health and social care professionals in the broader health service. A greater focus on these professions in the system will heighten public awareness and likely lead to raised expectations as a result. It is unlikely given the economic climate that this greater demand for services will be matched by increased numbers of professionals in the system, placing greater strain on service delivery and performance standards.

## **An economically constrained environment will continue**

The challenging economic environment has meant that CORU has experienced funding constraints. This is an important factor in the context of the organisation's Statement of Strategy. The majority of health and social care professionals have also felt the impact of reduced public sector funding. As a result of this, practitioners are now under more pressure to deliver effective services. While there are some signs of improving economic conditions, economic constraint is expected to continue in the short to medium term at least and constrained public finances are likely to be a reality for the foreseeable future.

The effect of the current economic situation in health and social care services has been to cut the budget by €2.5 billion over the past three years. At end December 2012, staff levels had reduced by 11,268 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE's) since the peak employment levels in September 2007<sup>1</sup>.

With this pressure on the healthcare system CORU must ensure best practice internally as well as promoting the maintenance of high standards among registered professionals at a time of strained resources.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Health's Public Service Agreement Health Sector 3rd Annual Progress Report - 1st April to 31st December 2012

## **There is a requirement for CORU to communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders**

At present, there is limited public awareness or understanding of our role. Until the opening of Fitness to Practise, CORU is focused on communicating with the professions to be regulated, representative bodies, the employers, educators and policy makers, as well as initial communications with patient and service user advocacy groups. As its role develops and expands over the period of this strategy, CORU must seek to ensure that the public has a clear understanding of its role and responsibilities as a regulator of health and social care professionals. We must also seek to ensure that there is awareness amongst registered professionals of the distinct roles of the regulator, professional bodies and employers.

### **3.3 Our Key Challenges and Strategic Objectives**

In the context of our operating environment described above, there are a number of clear challenges for CORU over the life of this Strategy. These are described below and the resulting strategic objectives in response are outlined.

#### **Challenge 1: Delivery on our mandate to protect the public requires expeditious roll-out of the regulatory framework**

To deliver on our mission to protect the public requires timely implementation of the regulatory regime across all the professions under our remit and embedding these requirements in the way the professions operate. Our success and experience to-date has laid the foundations of the roll-out of our regulatory model to the remainder of the professions. Ensuring that all the professions are fully compliant with the regulations will require:

- timely appointment of the Registration Boards by the Minister for Health;
- readiness of the professions for regulation in terms of existing standards of education, professional conduct and codes of ethics;
- availability and commitment of suitably qualified professionals and lay members to participate fully in the work of the respective Boards;
- consistency of application of the regulatory framework established by CORU across the professions to ensure efficiencies and consistency in how we deliver on our mandate;
- ensuring that the members of the respective professions are fully aware of their legal obligation to register once their Registration Board opens the Register for membership;
- taking the necessary steps to ensure enforcement of the new regulatory regime;
- conducting inquiries and deciding on appropriate sanctions if registrants fail to meet the standards set;

- timely integration of the Opticians Board;
- monitoring of educational programmes to ensure they meet the required standards;
- Setting and monitoring CPD requirements for the professions.

As Ireland's first multi-profession regulator, we must ensure that there is a consistency in our approach and message, and also that the unique needs of each of the individual professions are met.

We have a diverse registrant base, delivering diagnostic, therapeutic and psychosocial services in a variety of settings. These range from those working in hospital services, to community multi-professional teams; from specialised units, schools, social services, to sole private practitioners. It is imperative as a regulator that registrants have confidence in our ability to carry out our functions. We must actively engage with registrants to ensure they understand our role and what it means for them. Engagement and understanding are the foundation of confidence in the conduct of our role.

#### **Strategic Objective 1:**

To achieve complete roll-out of the regulatory regime across all professions under our remit.

#### **Strategic Objective 2:**

To complete the transition to include the Opticians Board under our remit.

#### **Strategic Objective 3:**

Rollout the Fitness to Practise framework promptly once the respective professional Registers are open.

#### **Strategic Objective 4:**

To be consistent in our approach and flexible where necessary while ensuring a regulatory framework that delivers on our remit.

### **Challenge 2: Meeting the developing needs of a diverse and changing national demographic.**

These ongoing changes pose several challenges:

- To meet differing service users' expectations of the health and social care system;
- To ensure that equality, diversity and accessibility are at the heart of how the health and social care system operates;
- That education and qualification standards are maintained while complying with EU policy on the free movement of professionals and incorporating the changes proposed under EU Directive 2005/36/EC (as amended);
- By working with national regulators of doctors, nurses, dentists and pharmacists and regulators of health and social care services; we deliver linked up regulation systems for professionals in the most effective and efficient manner possible; and

- By working with other international regulators, to ensure that international applicants meet the required standards for admission to our Registers.

### **Strategic Objective 5:**

To ensure CORU has the necessary capabilities and systems to successfully implement regulation in a demographically diverse and changing state.

### **Challenge 3: Keeping up-to-date with developments across the professions and ensuring regulation reflects best international practice**

CORU operates in a complex, rapidly changing environment. The role of individual professions, how they carry out their work and how they interact with service users, colleagues and other professionals continues to develop. For example, the introduction of tele-medicine, expansion of roles, improvements to business processes, and new communication technologies all pose opportunities in ensuring patient/service user safety and welfare.

There are lessons to be learned from the experience of regulation of other professions both in Ireland and abroad. Regulatory failures of the professions under our remit in other jurisdictions highlight the need for vigilance and co-operation with other regulators. In this regard, CORU aims to positively influence the reform agenda to ensure the regulatory regime is fit for purpose.

On-going training, development and updating of our members and staff is critical to managing the demands and changes in the regulatory environment. In this regard, CORU has a key role in engaging with academic institutions to encourage provision of qualifying courses for aspiring registrants that embody best academic practice.

### **Strategic Objective 6: Continue to build our national and international networks to facilitate knowledge sharing and feed learning into the regulatory regime.**

### **Challenge 4: Finance and resource constraints will impact CORU's ability to deliver on its mission**

Under the Act, CORU must strive to become a self-funding regulator. CORU has been receiving seed funding from the Department of Health to-date.

There are a number of registration boards recently or soon to be appointed. The opening of these Registers is a significant component of CORU's work programme between 2013 and 2016. Allied to this our funding model is predominantly based on the income we generate from registration fees.

Recent developments in relation to public service pay determination under the Haddington Road Agreement have resulted in the registration fee payable by registrants being reduced to €100 from €295 per person for the period 2013 to 2016. Notwithstanding this based on 20,000 registrants the projected cost of implementing the Health and Social Care Professionals Act is estimated at €295 per registrant.

As our work expands, so will our requirement for organisational resources. Building and expanding an organisation at a time when public sector staff numbers are severely restricted is difficult and requires innovative workforce planning and service delivery solutions to deliver on our mandate. ICT will be a

core enabler to ensure a high standard of service. The use of outsourcing and shared services will also be considered where appropriate if it delivers quality and efficient services on behalf of CORU.

**Strategic Objective 7:**

To continue to build a high performing organisation that is fit for purpose.

**Strategic Objective 8:**

To minimise the cost of regulation while delivering on our mandate.

**Strategic Objective 9:**

To ensure an ICT infrastructure that is flexible, cost-effective and delivers our requirements.

**Challenge 5: Delivery of CORU's work depends heavily on voluntary service on Council and Registration Boards**

CORU relies heavily on the active involvement of its Council and Board members, all of whom offer their services voluntarily with the support of their employers. As our work continues to expand and develop, it is likely to be more dependent on these members to maintain their commitment and provide leadership to achieve our goals and objectives. This has led to practical challenges of getting Council and or Registration Board members released to attend meetings. It is vital that CORU engages with employers to gain their support for CORU's work and their employees' valuable and essential contributions to their professions.

**Strategic Objective 10:**

To ensure that there is sufficient commitment, involvement and contribution from members and support for their work in order to successfully implement regulation.

**Challenge 6: Building stakeholder confidence in the work of CORU through effective communication**

The effective long-term implementation of the regulatory framework will depend on a number of factors relating to our ability to communicate effectively with our stakeholders. Firstly, to establish comprehensive Registers of membership for the professions depends on all their respective members applying for membership. They must clearly understand that to use their professional titles requires statutory registration. Secondly, the public must be made aware of how the new framework intends to enforce the highest professional standards and fitness to practise. They must be able to access clear guidance on matters such as how they can raise concerns and the grounds upon which they can make a complaint. Thirdly, education providers must understand that their programmes must meet the necessary criteria and standards for approval by the respective Registration Board and the specific requirements in each case.

In all these case there must be clarity in relation to the respective and distinct roles of the Boards, Council and the representative bodies of the professions.

**Strategic Objective 11:**

To effectively communicate by ensuring that our communications meet the specific needs of each of our stakeholder constituencies.

### **Strategic Objective 12:**

Promotion of CORU's purpose, vision and operation amongst key stakeholders, especially the public and the designated professions.

### **Challenge 7: Ensuring that the CORU embodies best practices in organisational leadership and governance**

CORU operates in a complex governance structure. As such maintaining the highest standards requires clarity of roles and responsibilities, clear decision-making and consistency in how we operate. While the Registration Boards are responsible for establishing and maintaining their Registers, including approval of education qualifications, Council is responsible for corporate support structures including finance and delivering the Fitness to Practise regime. Thus there is a clear separation of functions, while at the same time Council is responsible for overseeing and co-ordinating the work of the Registration Boards. As a result, striking the right balance in this regard requires ongoing focus on our governance processes.

**Strategic Objective 13: Continue to implement high standards of corporate governance and operational effectiveness.**

## **3.4 Our Key Performance Indicators**

- Integration of the Opticians Board.
- Qualifications for entry to all of the Registers will be set.
- All Registration Boards established.
- Fitness to Practise regime commenced.
- Continuing Professional Development will be introduced at the end of the transitional period in respect of each Register.
- CORU will be the Competent Authority for all opened Registers.
- Online registration for all renewals.

## **3.5 Dependencies**

In order to deliver on our objectives successfully within the timeframe of this Statement of Strategy, a number of critical success factors must be in place. The pace of progress against our plan below therefore depends on the following.

### **Delivering modern fit for purpose regulation of Health and Social Care Professionals**

Successful regulation will depend on the timely establishment of the full regulatory framework envisaged under the Act and in particular the Fitness to Practise regime. Establishing a reputation for consistency, transparency and proportionality will require a continued focus on the mission,



vision and values of CORU.

### **Ensuring appropriate resourcing for the long-term**

In order to deliver on our mandate, ensure long-term stability and implement this strategy, CORU requires adequate financial and human resources. This includes access to a funding stream that is adequate for current and future operations including opening Registers, fitness to practise and monitoring of education and training for all the designated professions into the future.

### **Prompt appointment of the Registration Boards**

The appointment of Registration Boards is a function of the Minister for Health and as such is outside the direct control of the CORU. However, clearly the successful implementation of the regulatory regime envisaged under the Act requires the establishment of the Boards prior to registration of members of the professions.

### **Developing essential organisational capabilities**

The implementation of this strategy depends on having the necessary skills, competencies and organisational capabilities to deliver an increasing range and volume of regulatory tasks and functions. CORU will require appropriate resourcing including where applicable outsourcing arrangements to supplement the work of its core staff.

### **Implementing a robust ICT infrastructure**

Successful implementation of this strategy depends on having the technological infrastructure in place necessary to deliver an increasing range and volume of regulatory tasks and functions while enabling cost effective delivery of services.

## 4. Conclusion

This corporate strategy demonstrates how CORU will fulfil its remit to protect the public in the period 2013 – 2016. As a multi profession regulator with protection of the public at the core of what we do, it is vital that we build and grow an organisation with the necessary capabilities to deliver on our strategy in a way that is efficient and results focused.

This will be achieved by:

- Efficient roll-out of the regulatory framework
- Ensuring regulation reflects best international practice
- Ensuring that CORU embodies best practices in organisational leadership and governance
- Meeting the developing needs of a diverse and changing national demographic.

We thank all stakeholders who have engaged with us to date on this journey and look forward to working with you into the future as we seek to deliver a safer and more accountable health and social care environment.

## 5. Appendix

### 5.1 Glossary of Terms

<b>Act</b>	The Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005(as amended) establishing the Health and Social Care Professionals Council.
<b>Chairperson</b>	A Chairperson of the Council is appointed under the provisions of Section 9 of the Act. A Chairperson of the Registration Board is elected by the members of the Registration Board.
<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>	A person appointed to the post of Chief Executive Officer/ Registrar of the Council.
<b>CPD</b>	Continuing Professional Development.
<b>Council</b>	The Health and Social Care Professionals Council.
<b>CORU</b>	Collective brand name for The Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the Registration Boards.
<b>EU</b>	European Union.
<b>Executive</b>	The Chief Executive Officer and the administrative staff of CORU.
<b>FTP</b>	Fitness to Practise.
<b>HIQA</b>	Health Information and Quality Authority.
<b>Minister</b>	The Minister for Health.
<b>Registration Boards</b>	The individual Registration Boards for each of the professions to be registered under the Act.
<b>The Register</b>	The respective Register of Members for each of the designated professions.
<b>SWRB</b>	Social Workers Registration Board.

## 5.2 Strategic Planning Process

Three principal steps were followed in the strategic development process as follows:

Description	Objective
<b>Step 1:</b> <b>Environmental Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect relevant background data</li> <li>• Examine CORU's strategic focus</li> <li>• Conduct an environmental analysis (internal and external)</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2:</b> <b>Develop a Vision Statement, identify strategic priorities and develop strategic objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish assumptions for discussions</li> <li>• Create a philosophy driving the organisation</li> <li>• Develop a Vision Statement for the CORU</li> <li>• Develop an initial view of the priority areas and strategic objectives for the CORU</li> </ul>
<b>Step 3:</b> <b>Implementation Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify Strategic Objectives</li> <li>• Develop Key Performance Indicators</li> <li>• Identify dependencies</li> </ul>

The Council participated actively in this process and established a Strategy Steering Group to oversee and guide the development of the Statement. The Strategy Steering Group met on four occasions between January 2013 and December 2013.

All Council members were invited to a facilitated workshop led by strategy advisers in April 2013. Facilitated workshops were held with all staff, and meetings were held with representatives from the Registration Boards. Input was sought from the Department of Health, our parent Department.

A public consultation was advertised seeking comments and submissions on the draft statement. Our Statement was adopted by Council on 12 December 2013 following this consultation with all our key stakeholders.

## 5.3 The Designated Professions

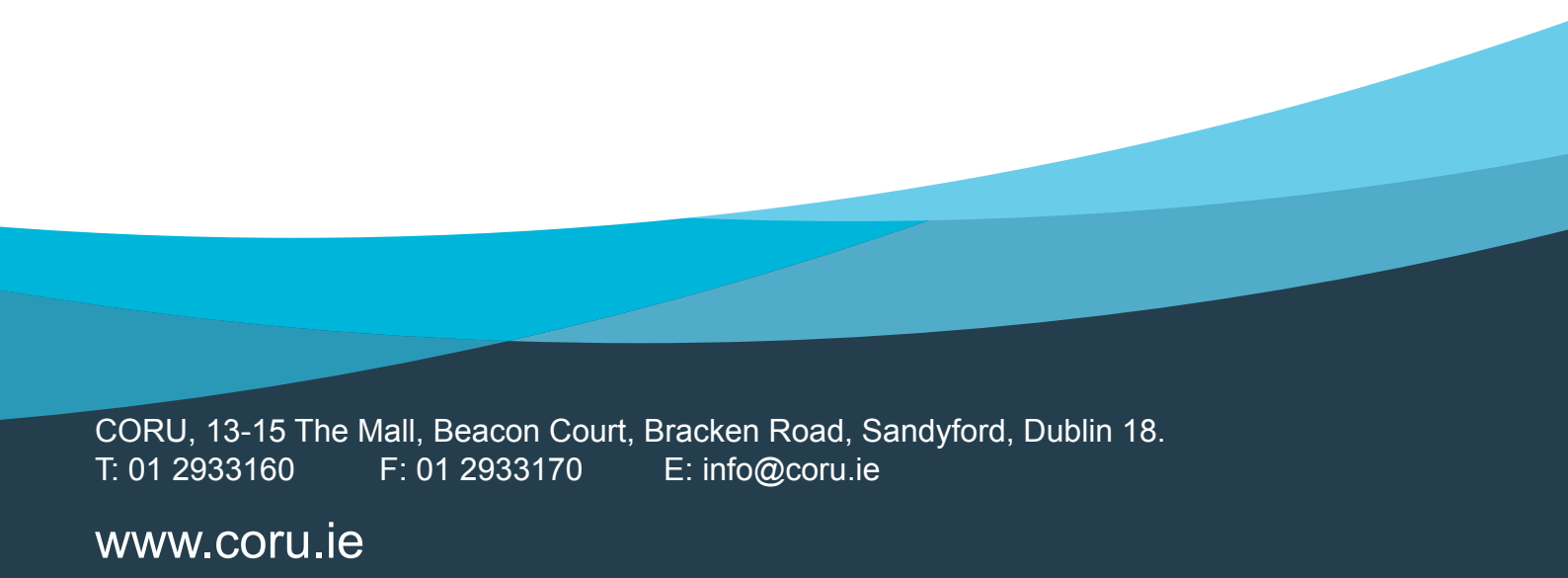
Professions governed by the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, (as amended) 2005

<b>Clinical Biochemists</b>	<b>Podiatrists</b>
<b>Dietitians</b>	<b>Psychologists</b>
<b>Medical Scientists</b>	<b>Radiographers</b>
<b>Occupational Therapists</b>	<b>Social Workers</b>
<b>Orthoptists</b>	<b>Social Care Workers</b>
<b>Physiotherapists</b>	<b>Speech &amp; language Therapists</b>

In the future CORU will also regulate dispensing opticians and optometrists and any further professions designated by the Minister for Health.







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