



Safe Start

Are you a doctor who
is new to medical
practice in Ireland?



Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leigh
Medical Council

This information has been designed to help doctors new to practice or returning to practice in Ireland. It will help you understand the general requirements when practicing here and how to deal with some common clinical practice scenarios that may arise.

Engaging in CPD relevant to the themes in this booklet can be recorded as part of your maintenance of professional competence.

General requirements when coming to practice as a doctor in Ireland

- ✓ If you want to practise medicine in Ireland you must be registered with the Medical Council of Ireland (the Council).
- ✓ You must have appropriate professional indemnity.
- ✓ You must maintain your professional competence. This means you must enrol in a Professional Competence Scheme and engage in continuing professional development (50 credits + 1 practice improvement/clinical audit activity per year).
- ✓ You must respect the Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners.

Introduction into the Irish healthcare system



Are you new to the Irish healthcare system? You need to be familiar with the following:

- ▶ Role of the primary, secondary and tertiary care in healthcare delivery;
- ▶ Role of health and social care professionals in Irish healthcare;
- ▶ Rights and expectations of patients in the Irish healthcare system.

Please consult the following learning sources:

1. HSE LanD website
2. Medical Council website:
 - ▶ [Working with Your Doctor: useful information for patients](#)
 - ▶ [Guide to professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners \(8th Edition 2016\)](#)
3. Irish Medical Schools
4. Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies (for example ICGP)
5. London and South East Postgraduate Medical And Dental Education website:
 - ▶ [Professionalism in Multidisciplinary team based care](#)

Consent



Are your patients always clear about what to expect from their treatment? Do you know how to obtain patient consent in line with guidelines on good medical practice?

Please consult with your Postgraduate Medical Training Body on courses relating to consent. Here are also a number of learning sources which provide further information on consent:

1. Medical Council website
 - a. [Guide to professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners \(8th Edition 2016\)](#)
 - b. [Medical Council Working with your Doctor: Useful Information for Patients](#)
2. Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies (for example RCSI, ICGP, RCPI)
3. Irish Medical Schools
4. Medical Indemnifiers (for example Medical Protection Society, Medisec)
5. HSE Website
 - a. [HSE National Consent Policy](#)
 - b. [HSE Quality Improvement Division Patient Safety Tool Box](#)
 - c. [HSE NDA National Guidelines on Accessible Health and Social Care Services](#)
6. [BMJ Learning](#):
 - a. Understanding Consent
 - b. The Mental Capacity Act
 - c. Confidentiality and disclosure: your guide to handling patient information

Prescribing



Do you know the requirements when prescribing medicine for a patient in Ireland? Do you know how to ensure that the treatment, medication or therapy you prescribe for a patient is safe, evidence-based and in the patient's best interests?

Please consult with your Postgraduate Medical Training Body on courses relating to prescribing. The following learning sources also have information on prescribing:

1. Medical Council Website
 - a. [Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners \(8th Edition 2016\)](#)
 - b. [Medical Council and Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland Safe Prescribing and Dispensing of Controlled Drugs – Joint Guidance](#)
2. [Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2017](#)
3. [HSE – Antibiotic Prescribing](#)
4. Irish Medical Schools
5. Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies (for example, RCPI, RCSI, ICGP (Quick Reference Guides))
6. NICE Guidelines
7. [BMJ Learning](#):
 - a. Safe and effective prescribing

End of life care



How confident do you feel about dealing with emotionally difficult and complex issues associated with End of Life care?

Please consult with your Postgraduate Medical Training Body on courses relating to end of life care. Please also find below guidance available to doctors:

1. [Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners](#) (8th Edition 2016)
2. Coroner Service - [Deaths which must be reported to the Coroner](#)
3. Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies
4. Irish Hospice Foundation website
 - ▶ [End of Life care](#)
 - ▶ [Guidance Documents for Healthcare Staff](#)
5. All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care
6. NICE Guidelines
 - a. End of life care for adults (QS13)
 - b. End of life care for infants, children and young people (QS160)
7. [The Palliative Hub](#)
8. [HSE Quality Improvement Division Patient Safety Tool Box](#)
9. [BMJ Learning](#):
 - a. Hospital presentations: palliative and end of life care (Specific to UK Law)
 - b. Introduction to advance care planning in practice (Specific to UK Law)

Medical record keeping



Medical records consist of relevant information learned from or about patients. They include visual and audio recordings and information provided by third parties, such as relatives. How familiar are you with requirements in medical record keeping?

Please find below guidance available in this area:

1. [Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners](#) (8th Edition 2016)
2. Data Protection Commissioner's Website (www.dataprotection.ie)
3. [Medical Protection Society – Record Keeping](#)
4. Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies
5. HSE Healthcare Records Management

Professional conduct and ethics



Good professional practice is based on a shared understanding between the profession and the public of the principles and values that underpin good care: partnership, practice and performance.

Please consult with your Postgraduate Training Body on courses relating to professionalism. Please also find below guidance available to doctors in this area:

1. [Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners](#) (8th Edition 2016)
2. Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies
 - a. [RCSI Professionalism Course](#)
 - b. [RCPI Professionalism Course for HST doctors](#)
3. [Bon Secours Hospitals - Professionalism in Healthcare](#)
4. [London and South East Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education website:](#)
 - ▶ Professionalism in Multidisciplinary team based care accessible on IMG specific pages
 - ▶ Module on Professionalism accesible on IMG specific webpages

Communication skills



Effective doctor-patient communication is a central clinical function in building a patient - practitioner partnership. There are several barriers to effective communication between patients and doctors.

Please consult the following resources:

1. Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies
2. HSE website
 - a. [Communications Toolkit](#)
 - b. [Communicating clearly webpage](#)
 - c. [HSE Quality Improvement Division Patient Safety Tool Box](#)
 - d. [Clinical Handover](#)
 - e. [HSE NDA National Guidelines on Accessible Health and Social Care Services](#)
3. Medical Indemnifiers (for example Medical Protection Society, Medisec)
4. [HIQA and NALA Guidance for providers of health and social care services – Communicating in plain English](#)

5. General communication skills for patient centred care, including skills for inter-professional and collegial communication.

BMJ Learning:

- a. Advanced Communication Skills Modules 1,2, & 3
- b. Complaint Management and Patients' Rights
- c. Building Professional Relationships

6. Communicating Risk and Shared Decision Making

BMJ Learning:

- a. How to calculate treatment risks and help patients make informed decisions

7. Managing disagreement among family members or caregivers

BMJ Learning:

- a. Complaint Management and Patients' Rights
- b. Dealing with complaints

8. To support challenging discussions including breaking bad news and those on end of life care

BMJ Learning:

- a. Supporting relatives and carers at the end of a patient's life
- b. Breaking bad news: a how to do it guide

Doctor's wellbeing



If you have concerns about your health or the health of a doctor you know, please consider the following options:

- ▶ [Discuss with your family doctor or contact the ICGP's Health in Practice Programme](#)
- ▶ Discuss with an Occupational Health Physician
- ▶ [Make contact with the Practitioner Health Matters Programme](#)
- ▶ [Contact the Medical Council Health Committee](#)

These supports provide a confidential and independent service to doctors that may be going through a difficult and stressful time. We encourage doctors to access these supports.

Additional Useful Resources

1. [HIQA: Supporting Autonomy: Guidelines](#) and [Leaflet](#)
2. [HSE Children First training: Children First training](#)

It is your responsibility to understand the general requirements when practicing in Ireland. The courses listed above will help you gain this knowledge.

For more information and links to resources please visit

www.medicalcouncil.ie/safestart



The Medical Council's mission is to ensure high standards of education, training and practice among doctors for the benefit of patients. This document has been designed to assist your integration into the Irish healthcare system. If you have any concerns, please contact us.

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