

**Minutes of the meeting of the Regional Health Forum, Dublin Mid Leinster held  
on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at the Boardroom, HSE Area Office, Arden  
Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.**

**Present:**

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Cllr. M. Dollard (Chairperson) | 14. Cllr. G. Horkan      |
| 2. Cllr. W. Aird                  | 15. Cllr. I. Keatley     |
| 3. Cllr. V. Blake                 | 16. Cllr. S. Langan      |
| 4. Cllr. G. Brady                 | 17. Cllr. A. Larkin      |
| 5. Cllr. F. Browne                | 18. Cllr. T. McKeigue    |
| 6. Cllr. P. Burke                 | 19. Cllr. D. Mitchell    |
| 7. Cllr. T. Cullen                | 20. Cllr. C. Murray      |
| 8. Cllr. M. Devine                | 21. Cllr. C. Ni Dhalaigh |
| 9. Cllr. J. Dillon Byrne          | 22. Cllr. K. O'Brien     |
| 10. Cllr. P. Doran                | 23. Cllr. P. Ormond      |
| 11. Cllr. M. Duff                 | 24. Cllr. D. Owens       |
| 12. Cllr. T. Fox                  | 25. Cllr. P.J. Reilly    |
| 13. Cllr. D. Marren               | 26. Cllr. E. Tuffy       |

**Apologies:**

Cllr. Denis O'Callaghan

Ms. Susan Temple, Secretary to the Regional Health Forum, Dublin Mid-Leinster

Dr. Phil Jennings, Director of Public Health, Dublin Mid-Leinster

**In attendance:**

Mr. David Walsh, Regional Director of Performance and Integration, Dublin Mid-Leinster

Mr. Kevin Cleary, Head of Business Unit, Dublin Mid-Leinster

Mr. Michael O'Keeffe, General Manager - Dublin Mid-Leinster Finance

Mr. James Conway, Assistant National Director, Midland Hospitals

Ms. Dymphna Bracken, Communications Manager, Dublin-Mid Leinster

**14.01.01 Adoption of minutes of meeting of the Regional Health Forum, Dublin-Mid Leinster held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2013.**

On the proposal of Cllr. Dillon Byrne, seconded by Cllr. P.J. Reilly the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013 were adopted.

**14.01.02 Chairperson's Correspondence**

Cllr. Dollard read out the correspondence that issued on behalf of the Forum to the Minister for Health as agreed at the previous meeting.

In addition Cllr. Dollard read out responses received from the Minister in relation to:

- Medical Cards for children aged five and over
- Granting of medical cards generally
- Medical Cards for people suffering from cancer

**14.01.03 Noting of report of Joint Committee Chairperson for the Acute Hospital Services and Population Health and Primary Community and Continuing Care Committees for October, November and December 2013.**

Members noted the above report.

**14.01.04 Noting of Regional Health Forum, Dublin Mid-Leinster Annual Report 2013.**

Members noted the above report.

A Wicklow County Council member requested an update regarding the draft report on the proposed Wicklow hospice.

**14.01.05 HSE Update – Dublin Mid-Leinster Section 38 Organisations**

Mr. David Walsh, Regional Director of Performance and Integration, DML, gave an update in relation to “Section 38 Providers”. The members then raised the following issues:

- **Business Cases**

Mr. David Walsh advised a number of Business Cases in respect of the payment of allowances to senior staff have been received. These Business Cases are currently in the process of being considered by the Internal Review Group and Mr. Walsh advised that he would provide a further update at the next meeting.

- **Costs Involved**

Members enquired that if the Business Cases submitted were successful, where the funding would be coming from. Mr. Walsh advised that this question has yet to be addressed. He added where allowances already exist/are being paid for 5 years then HR will need to re-approve same.

- **Persons Responsible**

Members enquired who is responsible for overseeing this process. Mr. Walsh advised that the HSE set up an Internal Review Panel to examine each business case. These Business Cases are then submitted to the Department of Health when the Internal Review Panel are satisfied that there are valid reasons for continuance of allowances. The Department of Health will then liaise with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform regarding the allowances/public pay policy.

The Regional Director of Performance and Integration presented reports on various aspects of the National Service Plan as follows:

- National Service Plan
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Primary Care Division
- Social Inclusion
- Mental Health Division
- Social Care Division
- Disabilities
- Older People
- Acute Hospitals
- Palliative Care
- Health and Wellbeing

Following the presentation members raised the following issues:

- **Palliative Care**

Members enquired if there were any plans to open additional palliative care beds. It was acknowledged that there was a unit opened in Blackrock, however, members felt that this unit would not be able to cope with the aging population in Dun Laoighre. Mr. Walsh advised that there were 2 Areas within Dublin Mid-Leinster in need of additional resources – the Midlands and Wicklow.

- **Redundancies/Retirements in the HSE**

Members enquired if there were new schemes being introduced in 2015. Mr. Walsh clarified a number of matters in relation to how employees exit the service under the scheme. Mr. Walsh further agreed to follow up with Social Protection with some other matters in this regard.

Mr. Walsh further stated that redundancies would not be targeted at front line services.

- **Older Persons Age Limit**

A Member enquired if there was a specific age limit that categorises a patient as an “Older Person”, as this member was following up on issues in relation to access to services. Mr. David Walsh stated that he was familiar with the issue and various options were being considered in this connection. Mr. Walsh further added that the introduction of a Single Assessment Tool will improve access for patients to services.

- **Private Health Insurance Income**

Mr. Michael O’Keeffe clarified the amounts generated the amount generated by private income. However, the introduction of new legislation (reduced bed rates but increased number of people who can be charged) will pose a significant financial risk for the HSE. He further stated that it is too early to comment further as the HSE is currently getting the information from hospitals.

- **HSE Leasing Space – Primary Care Centres**

Mr. Walsh stated that in relation to the Primary Care Centres, that generally, the buildings are privately owned but are leased by the HSE. He further stated that developers may have a mixture of public and private units in one building as this would be make commercial sense for the developer.

- **Social Care Division**

Mr. Walsh stated that this was the first time that both Older Persons and Disability Services were grouped together. Mr. Walsh further stated that there has been a lot of work carried out by certain agencies in DML in this regard and that this multidisciplinary approach is a more structured approach leading to better integration between the hospital and community services.

- **Local Meetings**

Members enquired about local meetings taking place with Area Managers as they needed clarification regarding services for 2014 within their areas. Mr. Walsh stated each Division is currently working on finalising their plans with the “Haddington Road Agreement” being utilised in this regard.

- **Home Help**

Mr. Walsh advised that the role of Home Help Co-ordinators involves balancing out the provision of home help hours for clients across their respective Areas. He further advised that Home Help hours across the region are reviewed on an ongoing basis to determine where needs are most required.

- **Equipment Costs / Recycling of used equipment**

Mr. David Walsh stated that in some cases the cost of recycling equipment was more expensive than replacing it. Mr. Walsh advised that he would follow up again in relation to this.

## **14.01.07 Motions**

### **Motion 1**

That the Health Service Executive would indicate if there are any plans/proposals to provide additional services at Mullingar Regional Hospital in the context of the 2014 Service Plan.

**Cllr. M. Dollard**

A report on this motion was prepared by Mr. James Conway, Assistant National Director, Midland Hospitals. Members noted the report.

### **Motion 2**

That the HSE outline procedural changes that have taken place at Portlaoise General Hospitals maternity ward as a result of the recent revelation over infant mortality rates and that this forum call for an immediate HIQA investigation into infant deaths at Portlaoise between 2006 and 2012 .

**Cllr. I. Keatley**

A report on this motion was prepared by Mr. James Conway, Assistant National Director, Midland Hospitals. Discussion took place between members and the RDPI regarding this response. The RDPI acknowledged the contributions of various members in this regard. Members noted the report.

### **Motion 3**

That the HSE re-evaluate its Ambulance Service operating in Laois and in Portlaoise Regional Hospital.

**Cllr. K. O'Brien**

A report on this motion was prepared by Mr. William Merriman, Area Operations Manager, HSE National Ambulance Service. Discussion took place between the members and the RDPI in connection with this response. The RDPI agreed to contact the National Ambulance Service to arrange a meeting with the Councillors from the four Midlands Counties in relation to matters raised.

## **14.01.07 Questions**

Responses to questions submitted were circulated to members.

In relation to response to submitted regarding Question 7, a discussion took place between the members and the RDPI. Members highlighted their concerns and acknowledged that families were being dealt with through the current ongoing process in connection with Portlaoise Hospital.

Cllr. Aird, Cllr. O'Brien and Cllr. Dollard on behalf of the Forum extended their sympathy to the families involved.

**14.01.08 AOB**

Cllr. Dollard enquired as to when the Acute Psychiatric Unit, St. Loman's will be officially opened. Mr. David Walsh agreed to follow up in this regard.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Cllr. Michael Dollard  
Chairperson  
Regional Health Forum  
Dublin – Mid Leinster

Date: \_\_\_\_\_