

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM - DUBLIN NORTH EAST

FÓRAM RÉIGIÚNACH SLÁINTE - BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH AGUS AN TÓIRTHUAISCEART

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 24TH MARCH, 2014 AT 2:00PM

IN THE BOARDROOM, HSE, BECTIVE STREET, KELLS

**Members Present**

Cllr. Christy Burke  
Cllr. Tommy Byrne  
Cllr. Kieran Dennison  
Cllr. Ann Dillon Gallagher  
Cllr. Anthony Donohoe

Cllr. Nick Killian  
Cllr. Eithne Loftus  
Cllr. David Maxwell  
Cllr. Paddy McDonald  
Cllr. Séamas McGrattan

Cllr. Gerry McGuire  
Cllr. Brian McKenna  
Cllr. Mags Murray  
Cllr. Patrick O'Reilly  
Cllr. Bill Tormey

**Not in Attendance**

Cllr. Anne Devitt  
Cllr. Oliver Fox  
Cllr. Robbie Gallagher

Cllr. Colm Markey  
Cllr. Lucy McRoberts  
Cllr. Gerry Murray

Cllr. Michael O'Dowd  
Cllr. Larry O'Toole  
Cllr. Joe Reilly

**Apologies**

Cllr. William Carey  
Cllr. Grainne Maguire

Cllr. Pat Crimmins

Cllr. John Redmond

**Officials Present**

Ms. Rosaleen Harlin, Lead Manager, Regional Health Office - HSE DNE  
Ms. Angela Fitzgerald, Regional Director for Performance and Integration, HSE DNE  
Mr. Gerry Raleigh, Director, National Office for Suicide Prevention  
Mr. Des O'Flynn, Area Manager – Dublin North City  
Mr. Martin Collum, Area HR Manager – Cavan Monaghan  
Ms. Fiona Murphy, General Manager – Louth Meath  
Mr. Enda Doody, Manager, Office of the Area Manager – Dublin North  
Mr. Robert Kidd, Regional Business Manager, Office of the RDPI  
Ms. Katherine Kellett, Regional Health Office - HSE DNE  
Ms. Lorraine Timmons, Regional Health Office - HSE DNE  
Ms. Ann Martin, Press Officer, Communications - HSE DNE

**1. Adoption of minutes of meeting held on Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2014**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2014 were adopted by the Forum on the proposal of Cllr. Ann Dillon Gallagher and seconded by Cllr. Anthony Donohoe.

Cllr. Brian McKenna stated that he was still waiting on a report into delays to a Monaghan ambulance call which he raised at the November Forum meeting. Cllr. McKenna was informed that this matter had been progressed and that a response would issue shortly.

Cllr. Paddy McDonald enquired in relation to an update on Killeshandra Health Centre which was requested at the February Committee meeting. It was agreed to follow up this matter.

Cllr. Christy Burke sought advice in relation to inoculation for members of a homeless charitable organisation in Dublin Inner City. It was agreed that he would forward details to the Regional Health Office for follow up.

**2. Health Service Executive Updates**

A report was circulated to the meeting which dealt with the following:-

- HSE publishes Childhood Obesity Surveillance data
- You can QUIT – We can help
- HSE pays tribute to Gerry Collins, from the QUIT campaign, who has died of lung cancer
- Recent audit shows the introduction of the tobacco free campus policy at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital is a positive step
- Review of Ambulance Services provided by Dublin Fire Brigade
- Staff at Cavan General Hospital take part in ‘Operation Transformation’ Get Fit Challenge
- New initiative for young adults with Autism or Complex Needs Launched by Minister Lynch
- Public Listening Meetings - Tell us what you think about the mental health services

The report was noted by the Forum.

**3. Presentation on National Office for Suicide Prevention**

Mr. Gerry Raleigh, Director, National Office for Suicide Prevention, made a presentation to members on the National Office for Suicide Prevention (copy appended to the official minute).

Members thanked Mr. Raleigh for his presentation and a discussion took place where members raised the following issues:-

- Request for details on new Samaritans Free Phone number;
- Counselling services and supports available for families following a suicide by a family member;
- Contact details for Suicide Resource Officers;

- Influence of alcohol;
- Concern in relation to numbers of suicide organisations nationally - role and effectiveness of these groups;
- Confusion for individuals in relation to where to go to seek help;
- Incidence of suicide among men and the difficulty in getting men to talk about their mental health;
- Stigma still attached to mental health illness;
- Figures in relation to suicides contributed to by economic downturn;
- Reported high levels of suicides in certain areas of the country, e.g. Bailieborough, Co. Cavan – request for statistics for counties Cavan and Monaghan;
- Statistics on suicide rates amongst the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) population;
- Quantity and availability of drugs prescribed for mental health problems;
- Responsible reporting by the media.

Mr. Raleigh responded to the questions and comments from the members as follows:-

- The new Samaritans Free Phone number will be circulated to members;
- The NOSP provides direct funding to Console for the provision of bereavement counselling to those affected by suicide in Ireland. Contact can also be made through Suicide Resource Officers;
- Contact details of Suicide Resource Officers to be circulated to members;
- Alcohol misuse continues to be a significant factor in self-harm and suicide in Ireland with a strong relationship between binge drinking and poor mental health outcomes. The NOSP continue to address this very important issue;
- The NOSP funds 31 organisations nationally and coordinates the activity of the many voluntary and statutory agencies that are engaged in suicide prevention activities in Ireland. When a small organisation approaches the NOSP, they will be funded for a pilot period and evaluated thereafter to determine if the service is working and if it is safe. Following a positive evaluation, the service may be scaled up and rolled out nationally, e.g. SCAN, DBT programme;
- It is acknowledged, that at times, it may be difficult to access the supports available. This can occur because of reluctance to seek help, uncertainty of where to go to access support or because of gaps in the coordination of services. One of the key priorities for NOSP, working with partners and the community, is to support people to seek help, to clearly signpost where quality assured support is available and to ensure that services are coordinated in a seamless, timely and equitable manner. The HSE runs Counselling in Primary Care which ensures free access to counselling for medical card holders. Initiatives are also run throughout schools nationally, e.g. Jigsaw;
- Every week on average ten people will end their lives by suicide. Eight of these will be men, generally in the 40 to 60 year old age group. The HSE, the Department of Education and the Department of Health have published National Guidelines in relation to Mental Health and Suicide Prevention for Post Primary Schools. The guidelines outline how schools can equip young people with skills for life, including resilience building. This is especially important for young men;
- Research has shown a powerful positive impact from recent media coverage by national celebrities on mental health issues in destigmatising mental illness. It also broadens discussion on the subject;

- There is no doubt that the economic downturn contributed to an increase in suicide rates. Year on year, rates had been decreasing, until in 2007 where rates started to increase. However, it is important to note that evidence shows that no one factor can be attributed to suicide;
- The National Suicide Support and Information System (SSIS) undertook a surveillance of suicides in Cork city and county. The report outlining their findings is available on the NOSP website. Studies are also being undertaken with the National Coroner's Office in relation to suicides in urban settings and in County Donegal. This will also be considered for national roll out. Figures for Cavan and Monaghan will be circulated to members;
- The LGBT community has been shown to be at higher risk of mental health problems and self-harm compared to the general population. The NOSP maintain a strong relationship with Glen (Gay and Lesbian Equality Network) to implement a targeted mental health promotion programme targeted at the LGBT community. Statistics on rates will be circulated to members;
- National data shows that drug overdose is the primary method used in deliberate self-harm in this country. In 2009, the 'Dispose of Unused Medicines Properly' (DUMP) campaign was organised by the HSE with community pharmacists in Cork and Kerry. This was a free service to dispose of unused/out of date medicines safely and a potential way of restricting access to means for suicide and self-harm. An audit of the drugs returned to the pharmacies showed that there was no strong correlation with medicines which may have been used for suicide. The majority of the drugs returned included antibiotics, cancer treatment medicines, etc.;
- National Media Guidelines on the reporting of suicide have been developed by the Samaritans and the Irish Association of Suicidology (IAS). These will work to ensure that the media portrays suicide in a responsible and accurate way.

#### 4. **Motion**

The response was noted by the Forum.

#### 5. **Questions**

To ask the HSE if an investigation has taken place into the Ambulance Response Time in the case of the late Mr. Wayne McQuillan deceased?

Has the HSE made any contact with the family of the late Mr. Wayne McQuillan deceased?

*Cllr. Tommy Byrne*

Cllr. Byrne stated that nobody had contacted the family concerned and asked where did the ambulance come from.

Mr. Byrne was assured that the review into this matter is still in progress and these issues will be dealt with following its publication.

That the Manager provide a report on the insufficient capacity in the Morgue at Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown and to state (i) the number of fridges; (ii) the number of post mortems carried out in 2011, 2012 and 2013; (iii) the outcome of post mortems, by type, carried out in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

To request that the Manager make available funding for increased capacity, as the current situation is inhumane and upsetting for family members of deceased patients. Connolly, with its huge catchment area, its location on the M50/M3 axis, and as a regular destination for high profile murders, victims of gun crime etc., must take urgent action to remedy this upsetting situation.

*Cllr. Mags Murray*

Cllr. Murray questioned the lack of capacity at the morgue and asked what the situation is in the event that there is not sufficient capacity for remains. She also outlined concerns in relation to the unit being situated over the hospital's boiler system.

Ms. Angela Fitzgerald assured Cllr. Murray that the issues would be investigated further, particularly in relation to viewing hours, capacity and dignity and respect and a more comprehensive response would be made available.

**6. Report by Chairperson of Committee**

The report was noted by the Forum.

**7. Chairperson's Correspondence**

There was no business under this item.

**8. Date and time of next meeting**

Due to the forthcoming local elections, it was agreed that the next meeting of the Regional Health Forum - Dublin North East will take place on Monday, 19th May, 2014 at 10:30am.

**Signed:**

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**Bill Tormey,**  
**Chairperson.**