

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM - DUBLIN NORTH EAST

FÓRAM RÉIGIÚNACH SLÁINTE - BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH AGUS AN TOIRTHUAISCEART

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 22ND NOVEMBER, 2021 AT 2:00PM

By Microsoft Teams

Members Present

Cllr. Tom Behan
Cllr. Kieran Dennison
Cllr. Deirdre Heney
Cllr. Brigid Manton
Cllr. Kevin Meenan
Cllr. Emer Tóibín

Cllr. Christy Burke
Cllr. Michelle Hall
Cllr. Sean Kelly
Cllr. David Maxwell
Cllr. John Sheridan
Cllr. Gillian Toole

Cllr. Mary Callaghan
Cllr. Adrian Henchy
Cllr. Howard Mahony
Cllr. Brian McKenna
Cllr. Trevor Smith

Not in Attendance

Cllr. Daryl Barron
Cllr. Craig Lovett
Cllr. Aisling O'Neill
Cllr. Niamh Souhan

Cllr. Séamus Coyle
Cllr. Séamas McGrattan
Cllr. Colm O'Rourke

Cllr. Aiden Fitzpatrick
Cllr. Eoghan O'Brien
Cllr. Patricia Roe

Apologies

Cllr. Ray McAdam

Cllr. Aoibhinn Tormey

Officials Present

Ms. Mellany McLoone, Chief Officer, CHO Dublin North City & County
Mr. Joe Ruane, Head of Primary Care, Midlands Louth Meath CHO
Mr. Cathal Hand, Network Manager, Monaghan Primary Care Services
Mr. Ken Fitzgibbon, Group Strategic Director of Organisation Development and Transformation, Ireland East Hospital Group
Mr. Liam McHale, Communications and Parliamentary Affairs, CHO Dublin North City & County
Ms. Katherine Kellett, Regional Health Office – HSE DNE
Ms. Lorraine Timmons, Regional Health Office – HSE DNE

Cllr. Michelle Hall, Vice Chairperson, opened the meeting.

1. Adoption of minutes of meeting held on Monday, 27th September, 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 27th September, 2021 were adopted by the Forum on the proposal of Cllr. Howard Mahony and seconded by Cllr. Emer Tóibín.

2. Health Service Executive Updates

Mr. Liam McHale, Communications and Parliamentary Affairs, CHO Dublin North City & County, gave a report to the meeting which dealt with the following:

- HSE National Safeguarding Office Report;
- HSE and the Alzheimer Society of Ireland launch the expanded National Dementia Adviser Service;
- HSE encourages all at-risk groups to get their free flu vaccine;
- COVID-19 booster vaccinations;
- Alcohol Awareness Week;
- World COPD Day: HSE and NCP Respiratory empowering people living with COPD to self-manage their symptoms and live well this Winter;
- Schedule of Meetings 2022;
- Christmas Message.

The following outlines comments and queries raised by members and responses from senior management:

Review and evidence of HSE guidelines on standard drink allowances for women and men.

These guidelines are based on international evidence and are reviewed on a regular basis. A full response will be provided.

Lack of information on triggers of respiratory problems - chemicals in the atmosphere, sensitivity to household products, poor indoor air quality.

A response will be provided.

The report was noted by the Forum.

Cllr. Adrian Henchy, Chairperson, joined the meeting and took over as Chairperson.

3. Presentations on HSE Winter Action Plan

Ms. Mellany McLoone, Chief Officer, CHO Dublin North City & County, Mr. Joe Ruane, Head of Primary Care, Midlands Louth Meath CHO, Mr. Cathal Hand, Network Manager, Monaghan Primary Care Services and Mr. Ken Fitzgibbon, Group Strategic Director of Organisation Development and Transformation, Ireland East Hospital Group, gave presentations to members on Winter Action Plans.

The following outlines comments and queries raised by members and responses from senior management:

Clarification on the closure of the Handball Alley testing centre and provision of alternative centre.

The lease with Croke Park for the use of the Handball Alley is due to expire in early 2022. CHO DNCC have written to Croke Park with a view to extending the lease. In

the meantime, alternative city centres sites are being examined. Also, as part of the booster vaccination programme, the Jones' Road site at Croke Park is being utilised.

Recent report of transplant operation cancelled at the Mater Hospital - status of ED and other issues at the hospital.

The Mater Hospital has seen an approximate increase of 12% in ED presentations over past number of months. Covid-19 and ICT difficulties are particularly challenging at present and a lot of scheduled work has been transferred to private facilities.

Clarification on when booster vaccine should be administered and cases of young, healthy people receiving the booster prior to those over 60s and vulnerable people.

The recommendation for the booster vaccines is five months after the second dose of initial vaccines. Information will be circulated to the Forum. At present, boosters are being administered to those living in nursing homes and long-term healthcare facilities, healthcare workers and people aged 60 or older. A text message will issue from the HSE with a vaccination centre appointment. In instances where a younger person has received a booster, it is most likely that they work in a healthcare setting.

Concerns in relation to transmission of Covid-19 in schools and when under 12s will be vaccinated.

The decision to vaccinate under 12s is a matter for the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and is not the responsibility of the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) or National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC). If this becomes a recommendation, the HSE will comply and carry out these vaccinations.

Shortfall in carers and current position of statutory home support scheme.

The demand for home support has grown significantly since the onset of Covid-19. The home care sector has largely been very much reliant on a non-European workforce, which was subsequently hugely impacted by Covid-19. However, recently, Nursing Homes Ireland were successful in obtaining a derogation in this matter. A statutory scheme for the financing and regulation of home support services is a key Sláintecare reform proposal and work is ongoing in this area, albeit somewhat delayed due to the pandemic. The scheme will cover older persons, palliative care, disabilities, mental health and more and will involve a complex piece of legislation.

Need for substantial improvements in carers' terms and conditions.

The issue of pay and conditions has always been dealt with through the unions that represent homecare workers. Historically, caring roles have not received the same priority as other roles in relation to funding. However, it is acknowledged that there is a need to broaden out in terms of incentives. The issue of gender equality also needs to be addressed.

Dedicated recruitment campaign for carer staff and easily accessible link on HSE website.

This suggestion will be discussed with the Head of HR, MLM CHO. At present, jobs are advertised on multiple sites.

Request for details on staffing levels in Our Lady's Hospital, Navan, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda and Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown.

Staff numbers are published on HSE website for each hospital. Details will be circulated.

Use of the private sector for treatments.

CHO DNCC use private home care agencies and are very complimentary of their ability and capacity to deliver. Very strong governance and service level agreements

are in place between the HSE and any private providers. Additional capacity, whether public or private, should be welcomed.

Facility for elderly people to avail of the Covid-19 booster vaccines where GP practice is not providing and they are not familiar with technology.

If members have any particular constituents struggling to get the booster vaccine, they may provide details to the RHO and arrangements may be made for administration through the community vaccination centres.

Praise of system in place at vaccination centre, National Show Centre, Swords, and commendation of everyone involved.

Positive comments of experience will be passed on to those involved.

Locations of respite beds within DNCC.

Respite covers both older persons and disability services in CHO DNCC and is managed through the respite co-ordinators. Services are also procured through the private sector. Details will be provided.

Evidence of children presenting to any of the children's hospitals with respiratory or Covid-19 related illnesses.

The Children's Hospitals have had a huge increase in presentations to their EDs with respiratory related conditions. Details will be provided.

Updated or new version of vaccines – view that original vaccines have not performed as expected and have not stopped transmission.

This matter is beyond the remit of the HSE. However, it is important to acknowledge that vaccines have worked extremely well and have played an enormous part in the reduction of both numbers getting the virus and also admissions to hospitals. Research and learning is constantly evolving and feeding into the development of vaccines, however, the HSE are not aware of any specific changes.

Dundalk Vaccination Centre and ability to cater for walk-ins requiring the booster vaccination.

Vaccination centres do not cater for walk-ins at the moment. They operate by appointment only, in order to manage numbers attending and ensure social distancing. This may evolve in future.

Need for testing centre in Drogheda.

All testing centres are operating at maximum capacity at present. Factors relevant to the opening of any new centre include a number of dependencies such as lab capacity, logistics, ambulance service, etc. Decisions in relation to pop-up centres are determined nationally, with local input. The HSE are aware of challenges in the area and trying to increase capacity but are limited in what can be achieved at this time.

Increase in beds for mental health.

A response will be provided.

Lengthy waiting times for GP appointments and knock-on effect on Out-Of-Hours services.

Details will be provided on attendances at D-DOC and NEDOC. Out-Of-Hours is an emergency service only and over the past number of years, evidence has shown that people are using as a routine service.

4. Motions

There was no business under this item.

5. Questions

There was no business under this item.

6. Chairperson's Correspondence

There was no business under this item.

7. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Regional Health Forum - Dublin North East will take place on Monday, 24th January, 2022.

Signed:

Chairperson