

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM - DUBLIN NORTH EAST

FÓRAM RÉIGIÚNACH SLÁINTE - BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH AGUS AN TÓIRTHUAISCEART

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 22<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2025 AT 2:00PM

IN THE BOARDROOM, HSE OFFICES, BECTIVE STREET, KELLS, CO. MEATH  
& VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

**Members Present** (*in person*)

Cllr. Kieran Dennison

Cllr. Mary McCamley

**Members Present** (*online*)

Cllr. Donna Cooney

Cllr. Fiona Mhic Conchoille

Cllr. Conor Reddy

Cllr. John Smyth

Cllr. John Paul Feeley

Cllr. Edel Moran

Cllr. Áine Smith

Cllr. Ellen Troy

Cllr. Alan Johnston

Cllr. Ejiro O'Hare Stratton

Cllr. Trevor Smith

**Apologies**

Cllr. Christy Burke

Cllr. Paul O'Rourke

Cllr. Pdraig Coffey

Cllr. John Stephens

Cllr. Séamus Coyle

**Not in attendance**

Cllr. Eimear Carbone-Mangan

Cllr. Deirdre Heney

Cllr. Bronagh McAree

Cllr. Tom O'Leary

Cllr. Supriya Singh

Cllr. Yvonne Everard

Cllr. Tom Kitt

Cllr. Shane McGuinness

Cllr. Caroline O'Reilly

Cllr. Aoibhinn Tormey

Cllr. Michelle Hall

Cllr. Alan Lawes

Cllr. Cat O'Driscoll

Cllr. Gayle Ralph

**HSE Representatives Present** (*in person*)

Rosaleen Harlin, Regional Director of Communications and Public Affairs, HSE Dublin and North East

Katherine Kellett, Regional Health Office – HSE DNE

Lorraine Timmons, Regional Health Office – HSE DNE

**HSE Representatives Present** (*online*)

Dervila Eyres, IHA Manager, Cavan Monaghan

Mellany McLoone, IHA Manager, Dublin North City & West

Robert Kidd, IHA Manager, Dublin North County

Cllr. Kieran Dennison chaired the meeting.

**1. Adoption of minutes of meeting held on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2025 were adopted by the Forum on the proposal of Cllr. Mary McCamley and seconded by Cllr. John Paul Feeley.

**2. Health Service Executive Updates**

Rosaleen Harlin, Regional Director of Communications & Public Affairs, gave a report to the meeting which dealt with the following:

- Latest HSE Health App release: Thousands of health service appointments are now available to view on the HSE Health App;
- Reach out, check in, and help change the narrative this World Suicide Prevention Day;
- Men's Health Information Evening in Monaghan Library;
- HSE launches new Stroke public awareness campaign, highlighting the importance of timely intervention to improve survival and outcomes;
- HSE extends successful immunisation programme to protect babies from RSV this Winter;
- HSE expands hepatitis C home testing service with new free rapid oral test;
- HSE encourages everybody to be familiar with the signs and symptoms of sepsis;
- Establishing a HSE Dublin and North East Patient and Service User Council;
- Celebrating 25 Years of NEDOC Urgent GP Out of Hours Service;
- Decarbonising Healthcare in EU Regions;
- Palliative Care Awareness Days – St. Joseph's CNU;
- Baby Talk Launch.

The following outlines comments and queries raised by members and responses from HSE representatives:

- **HSE suicide support services for the Clontarf area**  
The Connecting for Life strategy guides suicide prevention in the HSE. Two suicide resource officers are available to respond in respect of this area. The councillor was requested to forward her correspondence through the Regional Health Office in order that the Officers could contact her directly.
- **Access to CDNT services through Irish**  
Clients can access HSE services in Irish, and interpreters can be arranged if needed, just as with other languages. The councillor was asked to share details via the Regional Health Office so this could be followed up with the relevant CDNT.
- **Clarification on whether Covid-19 vaccines are still being taken up mainly by older people**  
The Covid-19 vaccine is mainly focused on older people and healthcare workers, however, it remains available to anyone. This year, the main priority is promoting the flu vaccine, as asking people to get both flu and Covid shots previously reduced uptake of either. Councillors were encouraged to promote the flu vaccine in their communications.

Public health report that Covid-19 activity is at moderate, stable levels with expected fluctuations. The 2025 Spring/Summer wave was similar to 2024 but

with fewer hospitalizations and ICU admissions. Most hospitalized cases were aged 65+, especially 80+. Outbreaks mainly occurred in nursing homes and community or acute settings. Overall, both Covid-19 and flu levels remain low.

- **Flu vaccine uptake among HSE frontline staff**

Flu vaccine uptake among staff dropped over the past year or two, mainly due to staff choice rather than availability, as the vaccine is widely accessible through GPs, pharmacists and HSE vaccination teams. Peer-to-peer vaccination is also used. This year, there is a strong, innovative push to increase uptake and it is expected to return to higher levels.

The report was noted by the Forum.

### 3. **Presentation on HSE Dublin and North East**

Dervila Eyres, IHA Manager, Cavan Monaghan, gave a presentation to members on HSE Dublin and North East.

Members thanked Ms. Eyres for her presentation.

The following outlines comments and queries raised by members and responses from HSE representatives.

- **Central Referral Office for children's services and overlap with Tusla services**

The Single Point of Access (SPoA) is primarily for health and social care services, handling referrals from parents, GPs or schools in respect of disability, mental health, primary care or public health nursing services. Tusla handles child protection services separately, however, there are strong links between HSE and Tusla regarding complex cases. Integrated agency case forums allow both agencies to co-ordinate care for children with complex needs. The SPoA's purpose is to ensure children are triaged correctly and placed on the appropriate waiting list, providing initial information on referrals, though it doesn't directly reduce waiting times.

- **New surgical hub in Swords**

The surgical hub in Swords will initially operate weekdays and Saturdays due to staff contractual agreements. The hub will draw surgeons from hospitals across the region, not just Connolly. Patients with the longest waits will be prioritised, and surgeons may operate on a rotational schedule to maximize capacity. The hub will have its own anaesthetic and theatre staff and governance will be through Connolly Hospital.

- **Staffing for the surgical hub**

The hub has a dedicated staff allocation, covering anaesthetics, and theatre and support staff. The hub mainly addresses the lack of theatre access that limits surgeons' ability to see patients. The hub focuses on day case surgeries and does not have beds or ICU/HDU facilities, so complex surgeries remain at main hospitals. Future plans, including an elective hospital at Connolly, aim to expand capacity. Similar hubs at St James's and Tallaght hospitals have successfully reduced day case waiting times.

- **Use of term ‘Emergency Department (ED)’ rather than ‘Accident & Emergency (A&E)’ department**

‘Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC)’ is now the preferred, consistent term covering the full patient experience in the emergency department, including waiting times. ‘Accident’ is less commonly used as major trauma follows separate care pathways, while most ED cases involve general illness rather than trauma. It also reflects international practice and guidance from the National Emergency Medicine Program.

- **Update on how the new regional HSE structure and arrangements are functioning**

With the recent development of the Executive Management Team and the upcoming Integrated Healthcare Area management teams which are expected by year end, decision-making will be more localised, population-focused and integrated across hospital and community services.

The final stage of implementing Sláintecare builds on Community Healthcare Networks, with staff allocated to provide population-based services. Although waiting lists grew during Covid, improvements are underway, including recent Government funding to reduce primary care waiting lists.

#### 4. **Motions**

There was no business under this item.

#### 5. **Questions**

There was no business under this item.

#### 6. **Chairperson’s Correspondence**

##### National Vaginal Mesh Implant Oversight Group

The Department of Health have responded regarding vaginal mesh implants:

- In 2023, the HSE set up a National Vaginal Mesh Implant Oversight Group to monitor both primary surgeries and tertiary complication services in acute hospitals;
- The group’s role is to review implementation of the CMO’s recommendations and assess whether uro-gynaecological mesh procedures can safely resume, considering international practices;
- The Department has received the group’s report and is reviewing it with the HSE to ensure full implementation of recommendations;
- All vaginal mesh procedures remain paused until comprehensive implementation of the CMO’s recommendations is confirmed.

##### Restructure of Forum

Following the July Chairperson’s Correspondence regarding the Forum’s restructure and additional members:

- Fingal County Council has nominated:
  - Cllr. John Smyth (SF)
  - Cllr. Ellen Troy (Aontú)

- Meath County Council has not yet made its nominations.

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

The next meeting of the Regional Health Forum - Dublin North East will take place on Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2025.

**Signed:**

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**Chairperson**