

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM - DUBLIN NORTH EAST

FÓRAM RÉIGIÚNACH SLÁINTE - BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH AGUS AN TÓIRTHUAISCEART

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 23RD MAY, 2022 AT 2:00PM

via Microsoft Teams

Members Present

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|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Cllr. Tom Behan | Cllr. Christy Burke | Cllr. Kieran Dennison |
| Cllr. Aiden Fitzpatrick | Cllr. Michelle Hall | Cllr. Deirdre Heney |
| Cllr. Howard Mahony | Cllr. Brigid Manton | Cllr. David Maxwell |
| Cllr. Ray McAdam | Cllr. Brian McKenna | Cllr. Kevin Meenan |
| Cllr. Trevor Smith | Cllr. Emer Tóibín | Cllr. Gillian Toole |

Apologies

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| Cllr. Adrian Henchy | Cllr. John Sheridan | Cllr. Niamh Souhan |
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Not in Attendance

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| Cllr. Daryl Barron | Cllr. Mary Callaghan | Cllr. Séamus Coyle |
| Cllr. Sean Kelly | Cllr. Craig Lovett | Cllr. Séamas McGrattan |
| Cllr. Eoghan O'Brien | Cllr. Aisling O'Neill | Cllr. Colm O'Rourke |
| Cllr. Patricia Roe | Cllr. Aoibhinn Tormey | |

Officials Present

Mr. Liam McHale, Communications and Parliamentary Affairs, CHO Dublin North City & County
Ms. Sandra Taylor, Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention, CHO DNCC
Ms. Angela Walsh, Head of Mental Health, CHO DNCC
Mr. Pádraig O'Beirne, Area Director of Nursing, Cavan Monaghan Mental Health Services
Ms. Siobhan McEniff, General Manager, CHO 1 Mental Health Services
Ms. Emer Mulligan, Suicide Resource Officer, Cavan Monaghan Mental Health Services
Mr. Cathal Hand, Network Manager, Monaghan Primary Care Services
Mr. Joseph Ruane, Head of Primary Care, Midlands Louth Meath CHO
Mr. Gearóid Rennicks, Communications & Press Officer, Ireland East Hospital Group
Ms. Katherine Kellett, Regional Health Office – HSE DNE

Cllr. Michelle Hall, Vice Chairperson, welcomed members to the meeting.

1. Adoption of minutes of meeting held on Monday, 28th March, 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 28th March, 2022 were adopted by the Forum on the proposal of Cllr. Emer Tóibín and seconded by Cllr. Howard Mahony.

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:

- People aged 65 and over reminded to get second COVID-19 booster vaccine;
- Six new Public Health Areas established paving the way for Sláintecare Regional Health Areas;
- HSE welcomes the publication of the findings of the National Inpatient Experience Survey 2021;
- Know the Signs: HSE National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) urges people to act early on cancer symptoms;
- Outdoor workers urged to be SunSmart as they have a higher risk of developing skin cancer.

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

Suggestion that sunscreen dispensers be located in workplaces and public areas
Comments will be forwarded to the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP).

Public information campaign on Lyme Disease
Details to be provided.

Welcome to NCCP urging people to know the signs and act early on potential symptoms of cancer
Comments noted.

Welcome to SunSmart campaign and engagement the construction industry
Comments noted.

The report was noted by the Forum.

3. Presentation on Connecting for Life

Ms. Sandra Taylor, Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention, CHO DNCC and Mr. Pdraig O'Beirne, Area Director of Nursing, Cavan Monaghan Mental Health Services gave presentations to members on Connecting for Life.

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

Request for presentation in respect of Louth Meath at next meeting
It was agreed that a presentation would be provided.

Clarification on Connecting for Life plans: 2018-2020 and 2022-2024 and plan beyond 2024

Connecting for Life local and regional suicide prevention plans were developed and launched across the nine CHOs in 2017. Subsequently, the Connecting for Life: Dublin North City and County (2018-2020) was launched. The next plan in respect of 2022-2024 is due to be launched on Wednesday, 15th June.

CHO DNCC are continuing to implement actions from the 2018-2020 plan, and in tandem, have been developing actions for the new plan. Some actions will be very similar to those within the 2018-2020 plan and there will also be some new actions.

The National Office for Suicide Prevention are already working on the post 2024 period and they will review and evaluate the current implementation plan as to whether there is a need to develop a new strategy or whether the current strategy will be further extended.

Training for community groups and drug project groups in Dublin's Inner City

CHO DNCC Mental Health Service works with numerous drug project groups in the Inner City. Recently, HSE Mental Health undertook a Training Needs Analysis in this area to ascertain the training needs of these groups.

During the course of the pandemic, no in-person training sessions took place, however, online training was expanded during the restrictions, with a very good uptake.

The HSE also provide specific bereavement support to people with substance use issues. This area was also examined in terms of identifying any gaps.

Specialised training programmes are targeted to priority groups and one of the key priorities within the Connecting for Life: DNCC Implementation and action Plan 2022-2024 is to continue to deliver awareness training programmes, prioritising professionals & volunteers across community-based organisations, particularly those who come into regular contact with people who are vulnerable to suicide.

Support and services provided to mental health service users upon discharge from hospital and clarification on process for discharge of high risk patients

Statistics show that the two weeks following discharge from a mental health institution or hospital is the most critical period of time for patients. However, the provisions contained within the Mental Health Act, 2001 have to be taken into account in terms of detaining a person against their wishes.

The decision to discharge a patient from hospital is made by the patient's clinical team; Consultant Psychiatrist and multidisciplinary team. A decision to discharge will be clinically based on the patient's assessed need including a review of their presentation and how they have responded to clinical treatment. A Risk Assessment must also be carried out.

Following discharge, a follow-up appointment with the patient's Consultant will take place within a short period of time, with the support of Day Hospital services if required.

A Safety Plan is also provided to both the individual and any family outlining contact details should they feel the need to return to hospital.

Targeting of ASIST programme at GPs and District Nurses

ASIST is a two-day skills based course which trains participants to recognise and respond to a suicidal risk. The course provides opportunities to learn what a person at risk needs from others in order to keep safe and get further help.

It is widely accepted that the role of the GP is incredibly important in recognising and providing the necessary treatment to individuals who may be at risk of suicide. While GP trainees are taught to conduct clinical suicide risk assessments as part of their training, there have been identified needs to include a stronger focus on mental health and suicide prevention across the programme of continuing education that the ICGP offers. The ICGP now deliver a series of weekly webinars including topics such as; dealing with patients with suicidal ideation and/or self-harm; triaging patients with suicidal ideation and/or self-harm; diagnosing and managing early psychosis in General Practice, and managing the aftermath when patients die by suicide.

The ICGP and the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) continue to collaborate on the delivery of suicide prevention training to all GPs in training.

Need for training to be more targeted

There has been a recent agreement with HR in CHO DNCC to include suicide prevention training within Induction Training for all new employees, across all disciplines.

Methods of promoting START programme among the public

START is a basic introductory online programme which takes around 1.5 hours to complete. Within CHO DNCC, the programme is often pushed out through the CHO Twitter account. Details on the next programme will be made available on Twitter where members may retweet / circulate as appropriate.

Lack of information on reasons why certain individuals choose to die by suicide - request for information / statistics where either living with Dementia or caring for a loved one with Dementia may have been a motive

Request will be explored.

Connection between suicide and Lyme Disease

The matter will be examined.

Request for further information on €40,000 funding to local community groups in Cavan Monaghan

In 2021, the NOSP allocated €30,000 to Cavan Monaghan to implement initiatives to reach at-risk groups in relation to improving their mental health and reducing the risk of suicide and self-harm.

An open application process was initiated, requesting groups in the area who work with at-risk groups to apply for funding, with a maximum of €5,000 per group. From 19 initial applications, 12 groups were approved funding, among them Foróige, Youth Work Ireland, Cavan GAA and Family Resource Centres in the area.

Due to last year's success, the HSE applied for funding for 2022 and has been approved €40,000. The application process for local groups to apply for this funding will commence shortly.

Alarm that Cavan has the highest incidence of suicide per 100,000 population over past three years

Funding has recently been approved to commission further research to examine the factors behind these high suicide rates and any contributing factors in the local area. It is hoped such research can provide further information and background on suicide cases and some of the factors leading up to them. The request for tender was circulated on 12th May.

It is known that suicide is complex with many and varied risk factors but further information on any significant factors within Cavan Monaghan and the border region needs to be identified in order to address on a multi-agency basis.

It has also been established that a large number of suicides in Cavan Monaghan have not had any previous contact with the HSE or mental health services.

Need for additional training programmes to be rolled out among the general public to help identify signs of potential suicides

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, face-to-face training was paused during 2020 and 2021. Some online training was available during the period. Face-to-face training has resumed in Cavan Monaghan since March 2022 with a lot of interest from specific groups such as Education and Training Boards (ETB) and the GAA, where safeTALK training has been provided to local GAA clubs across the community in the evenings and Saturday mornings. Training requests have also been received from the County Council. This training is all in addition to the generic suite of training available.

Agreement on need for more coordinated and targeted delivery of suicide prevention training. The HSE are open to facilitating any requests for training.

Supports for schools following incidents of death by suicide

The HSE would like to reassure the public that supports are available and to encourage anyone needing help to connect in with resources, particularly the Suicide Bereavement Liaison Officer in first instance, who can offer support on a 1-1 basis or through small groups, with the option of further support if required.

The HSE also work closely with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) to support young people in the education system.

Comments in relation to sexual violence needs analysis in respect of Cavan and Monaghan

A response will be provided.

Roll out of Operation Encompass, an intervention in the UK for children who have experienced domestic abuse

A response will be provided.

During the course of the Cavan Monaghan presentation, Mr. Pádraig O'Beirne outlined a number of key developments in terms of service delivery through HSE Cavan Monaghan Mental Health Service in support of Connecting for Life Cavan Monaghan and members welcomed same:

- Suicide prevention training delivery – range of suicide prevention awareness programmes delivered annually across the county, including online training during Covid;
- Communication campaigns to promote events such as WMHD, WSPD, Green Ribbon month with a view to improving awareness of services available, enhancing help seeking and reducing mental health stigma;
- Specific projects aimed at improving mental health and wellbeing, e.g.:
 - Stories of Recovery Podcast Project;
 - Introduction of Stress Control programme in Cavan;

- Allocation of small grants to local community and voluntary groups to implement suicide prevention actions (€30K distributed during 2021 and €40K available for allocation during 2022);
- Crisis Numbers posters, wallet cards, referral pathway guidance documents developed, printed and circulated widely.
- Suicide Bereavement Liaison Service now in place through National Service Agreement between HSE NOSP and Pieta, funded by HSE;
- Suicide bereavement counselling and crisis intervention service for people at risk of suicide and self-harm;
- HUGG Suicide Bereavement Support Group established in Cavan;
- National Clinical Programme for Self harm operational as part of the Psychiatric Liaison Team in all Hospitals;
- Establishment of the SCAN (Suicide Crisis Assessment Nurse) Service;
- Establishment of the Early Intervention Youth Mental Health Service;
- Improved turnaround times for emergency referrals to the Adult Community Mental Health Teams;
- Ongoing work at Primary Care level in relation to liaison with GP's to support appropriate referral pathways into Mental Health Services;
- Skills Training on Risk Management (STORM) for all HSE Mental Health Service Staff.

Ms. Sandra Taylor took the opportunity to ask members to abstain from using the word 'commit' while referring to suicides, as the term is often associated with crime or a sinful act. Ms. Taylor asked that members might spread this message to their constituents through their work in the community.

Mr. Pdraig O'Beirne outlined that suicide prevention is everybody's responsibility and asked that we all encourage people to contact someone – talk to a GP, access a mental health service, look up online resources through Grow Ireland, Mental Health Ireland, the Samaritans, or another voluntary agency within their community.

Mr. O'Beirne emphasised the importance of reaching out and seeking help and gave assurances that help is there and services will be provided. He encouraged councillors to spread the message of Reach Out, Seek Help, in every available opportunity to them in the public arena, local radio, media, etc., and stated that there is always a solution to a problem, no matter what that problem is.

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, 25th July, 2022.

During the course of discussion at the meeting members also raised the following queries and issues:

Difficulties people are experiencing getting a GP appointment, particularly in County Meath
A complaint may be made through the HSE's 'Your Service Your Say' or they may also try an alternative GP.

Difficulties in sourcing a GP

If any medical card patient is having difficulty in registering with a GP and where they have been refused by three GPs or more, they can contact the Assignment Officer in PCRS and they will assign them to a GP within their area. In respect of private patients, this is matter between an individual and GP and the HSE have no ability to influence a GP to take on a private patient.

Request for update on GP trainee placements in respect of Louth Meath

An update will be provided.

Update on suggestion made at previous meeting in relation to recruitment campaign for carers

This matter was escalated at time by MLM CHO to National HR.

An update will be provided.

Plans to review Terms & Conditions for Carers

To be followed up.

Signed:

Chairperson