

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM - DUBLIN NORTH EAST

FÓRAM RÉIGIÚNACH SLÁINTE - BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH AGUS AN TOIRTHUAISCEART

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 26TH MAY, 2025 AT 2:00PM

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

Members Present (*in person*)

Cllr. Christy Burke
Cllr. Deirdre Heney

Cllr. Pádraig Coffey
Cllr. Mary McCamley

Cllr. Kieran Dennison
Cllr. Shane McGuinness

Members Present (*online*)

Cllr. Donna Cooney
Cllr. Tom Kitt
Cllr. Cat O'Driscoll
Cllr. Áine Smith

Cllr. John Paul Feeley
Cllr. Bronagh McAree
Cllr. Tom O'Leary

Cllr. Michelle Hall
Cllr. Fiona Mhic Conchoille
Cllr. Caroline O'Reilly

Apologies

Cllr. Edel Moran
Cllr. John Stephens

Cllr. Supriya Singh

Cllr. Trevor Smith

Not in attendance

Cllr. Eimear Carbone-Mangan
Cllr. Alan Johnston
Cllr. Gayle Ralph

Cllr. Séamus Coyle
Cllr. Alan Lawes
Cllr. Sarah Reilly

Cllr. Yvonne Everard
Cllr. Ejiro O'Hare Stratton
Cllr. Aoibhinn Tormey

HSE Representatives Present (*in person*)

Liam McHale, Communications and Public Affairs, HSE Dublin and North East
Rosaleen Harlin, Regional Director of Communications & 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*)

Mellany McLoone, IHA Manager, Dublin North City & West
Fergal Fox, Head of Stakeholder Engagement and Communications, Health and Wellbeing
Josephine Collins, General Manager, Primary Care, IHA Cavan Monaghan

Cllr. Kieran Dennison chaired the meeting.

1. Adoption of minutes of meeting held on Monday, 24th March, 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 24th March, 2025 were adopted by the Forum on the proposal of Cllr. Mary McCamley and seconded by Cllr. Christy Burke.

2. Health Service Executive Updates

Mr. Liam McHale gave a report to the meeting which dealt with the following:

- HSE Falls Prevention Framework Launch;
- Sod Turned at St. Christopher's Hospice, Cavan;
- The Village Residence, Drogheda officially opened by Kieran O'Donnell, T.D., Minister for Older People and Housing;
- Free HSE 'Balancing Stress' Programme launched to support mental wellbeing;
- HSE and Healthy Ireland launch new SunSmart Toolkit for Primary and Post-Primary Schools;
- GP chronic disease programme makes a difference for 400,000 people in Ireland;
- HSE takes next step to improve services for cardiac rehabilitation patients;
- Be tick aware, keep you and your family safe from Lyme disease.

Mr. McHale informed members that this was his last meeting as he is taking up a new role with the HSE West & North West. He expressed thanks to the members who he has worked with over the years.

The Chairperson and members thanked Mr. McHale for his service and wished him well in his future career.

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

- **Request for greater collaboration between HSE and local authorities on public infrastructure to prevent falls.**
Comments noted.
- **Welcome opening of the Village Residence, Drogheda. Request for details of numbers of people living with Dementia and details of any plans for dealing with increasing numbers.**
Recent announcement by Minister for Older People and Housing on the commencement of a National Dementia Registry. The registry will identify the need and plan for delivery of access to services.
- **Request for report on NEIC detailing the number of applicants currently in the city clinic in relation to methadone;**
- **Drugs projects in North Inner City – update on amalgamation process taking place;**
- **Rise in cocaine use in North Inner City – details on services that are in place;**
- **Funding for drug addiction services in the North Inner City;**
- **Number of rehabilitation / detox beds for medical card holders over the last year;**
- **Commendation of all staff in Summerhill Primary Care Centre for the services they provide**

It was agreed that a presentation on Drugs and Alcohol Addiction Services would be progressed for the next meeting.

- **Funding for Skerries Youth Support Service**
It was agreed that a response would be provided.

The report was noted by the Forum.

3. **Presentation on Men's Health**

Mr. Fergal Fox, Head of Stakeholder Engagement and Communications, Health and Wellbeing, gave a presentation to members on Men's Health.

The following outlines comments and queries raised by members and responses from Mr. Fox:

- **Clarification on Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI).**
MHFI is a Section 39 agency, funded by the HSE. It works on an all-Ireland basis, receiving funding by Department of Health in Northern Ireland also.
- **Importance of engaging men in their health, especially encouraging GP visits to be taken seriously due to men's lower attendance.**
Acknowledgement by GPs of value in engagement, and interactions.
- **Narrowing life expectancy gap between men and women in Ireland.**
A positive cultural shift in men seeking healthcare in Ireland has been noted. Discussion on disparities in healthcare access between wealthier and poorer men.
- **Advocating for more media exposure (e.g. Prime Time TV slot).**
The challenges in gaining positive media coverage was noted. Opportunities during Men's Health Week and International Men's Day were highlighted with an emphasis on addressing toxic masculinity and digital health concerns through upcoming campaigns.
- **Long-term impact of injuries on young men's mental health and suggested screening for men aged 40+, especially during Men's Health Week.**
Movember charity involvement and upcoming reports / campaigns in September and November aim to boost men's health awareness in Ireland.
- **Role of sporting organisations such as GAA, IFA, IRFU.**
The Healthy Club Programme has been funded nationally with the GAA for several years and Irish Life has joined as a corporate funder, branded as the Irish Life Healthy Club. The GAA remains a significant funder of the programme.

No similar partnerships currently exist with the IFA (Irish Football Association) or the IRFU (Irish Rugby Football Union); this issue was raised recently.

Movember, an international men's health charity, has recently established a presence in Ireland and funded a programme with the GAA focusing on young men's and women's health.

The Game Changer Initiative is set to launch with the GAA, targeting domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. This initiative gained media attention earlier this year.

- **Importance of active travel (cycling) as a part of men's physical and mental health, suggesting better collaboration and funding between HSE and active travel initiatives.**

Partnership with Active Travel to promote active travel within the HSE and some hospitals was outlined. There is also collaboration with the Irish Heart Foundation to develop multiple walkways around health sites and healthy campuses.

New physical activity guidelines were published earlier this year and the service is currently working on a campaign to promote these guidelines.

- **Request for more details about the text messaging program used to engage farmers,**

The program involves health checks, monthly calls, and text prompts. It has proven effective and it is planned to expand the programme through regional HSE / NGO partnerships.

4. Motions

That this Forum seeks an update on the operational arrangements for the new Surgical Hub at Swords Fingal North Dublin, which is under the governance of the Mater Hospital, and to call on the HSE to ensure a fair equitable clear protocol is established to include patients from Beaumont Hospital who are on waiting lists for procedures, in the services to be carried out at the Swords Surgical Hub.

Cllr. Tom O'Leary

Cllr. O'Leary proposed his Motion

Cllr. Kieran Dennison seconded the Motion.

Cllr. O'Leary raised concerns outlining that residents of Skerries, Balbriggan, Rush, Lusk and Swords predominantly use Beaumont Hospital rather than Mater Hospital. He stated that there is uncertainty about how patients currently served by Beaumont Hospital will access services at the new Swords surgical hub, which is geographically closer to Beaumont than to Mater. Cllr. O'Leary expressed the need for clear reassurance and a confirmed protocol to ensure equitable access for the entire catchment area, noting that Beaumont and the Mater belong to different hospital groups, complicating coordination.

Cllr. Donna Cooney agreed with Cllr. O'Leary's point regarding the referral process and referenced personal experience dealing with individuals suffering from brain injuries or bleeds and difficulties in accessing step-down facilities without proper referrals. Cllr. Cooney stressed the importance of the new facility in Swords being closely linked with Beaumont Hospital, given its proximity and requested formal reassurance that patients from Beaumont Hospital will be able to access the Swords facility through direct referrals.

Ms. Mellany McLoone, IHA Manager, Dublin North City & West assured members that the surgical hub is being developed for the region, not for any single hospital; it will facilitate day-case procedures for all hospitals within the Dublin and North East region, which includes Cavan Monaghan, Our Lady of Lourdes Drogheda, the Rotunda, the Mater, Beaumont and Connolly. She also outlined that Hospital Groups no longer exist;

all are now part of HSE Dublin and North East, and the hub is a regional initiative under this new structure.

Ms. McLoone stated that the hub will prioritise long-waiting patients on hospital lists. It is expected to operate approximately 14-16 hours per day, focusing exclusively on day cases.

Ms. McLoone informed members that an oversight group has been established by Ms. Sara Long, REO, and Mr. Patrick Clerkin, IHA Manager for Louth and Meath, chairs this group. Membership includes representatives from both the clinical and management forum. She suggested that a presentation to the Forum be organised towards year end.

Cllr. Deirdre Heney noted that the written response to the Motion was vague and expressed appreciation for Ms. McLoone's update. She questioned whether the service will be operational in the third quarter of this year.

Ms. McLoone outlined that the completion of construction and equipping is expected to be late October to early November 2025, therefore, realistically, the first procedure is anticipated in January 2026. Early completion is possible but January 2026 is considered a realistic target, unless unforeseen issues arise.

Cllr. Heney asked if a site visit for Forum members could be organised.

Ms. McLoone stated that current site conditions were unsuitable but a visit could be arranged.

Cllr. Tom O'Leary responded to the comments on his Motion thanking Ms. McLoone for her comprehensive reply. He acknowledged the positive news story and emphasised the importance of communicating it effectively.

The Motion was adopted by the Forum.

To ask the HSE to provide data on Disability Services actually being provided to people with brain trauma and other neuro disabilities in Meath in tabular format as follows:

- a) Information on the type of service currently being provided.*
- b) The numbers waiting for neuro disability services in various disciplines such as Neuro Physiotherapy, Neuro Occupational Therapy, Neuro Psychology, Neuro Psychiatry, Case Management, Counselling, Social Work and General Supports required by these people.*
- c) How many neuro disabled people below the age of 60 years are in residential services or nursing homes?*

Also, to outline plans for the provision of Neuro Services in Meath going forward in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by Ireland in 2018 in line with National Strategy & Policy for the Provision of Neuro-Rehabilitation Services in Ireland - From theory to action Implementation Framework 2019-2021 and the Report by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters Report – Aligning Disability Services with the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2023.

Cllr. Padraig Coffey

Cllr. Coffey proposed his Motion

Cllr. Kieran Dennison seconded the Motion.

Cllr. Pádraig Coffey provided some background information to his submission of the Motion and referred to a prior promise (circa 2018) regarding improvements or implementation of better services. He sought clarification on whether there will be any chance of improvement or actual implementation of the promised services from 2018.

Mr. Liam McHale, Communications and Public Affairs, HSE Dublin and North East, read the written response provided by Mr. Patrick Clerkin, IHA Manager Louth Meath.

Cllr. Coffey highlighted the difficulty in obtaining proper access to home support packages and emphasised the need for clearer guidance on how to access these services.

Cllr. Kieran Dennison, Chairperson, outlined that the Motion was not adequately addressed and suggested that Cllr. Coffey submit a further Motion seeking more specific details. He expressed disappointment that there was no senior manager in attendance at the meeting to directly respond to the Motions today.

Cllr. Deirdre Heney recommended that the official responsible for responding to Motions should attend meetings, either in person or online and referenced City Council protocol requires relevant officials to be present when matters affecting their department are discussed. She suggested a similar protocol for the Forum.

The Motion was adopted by the Forum.

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, 28th July, 2025.

Signed:

Chairperson