

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM - DUBLIN NORTH EAST

FÓRAM RÉIGIÚNACH SLÁINTE - BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH AGUS AN TÓIRTHUAISCEART

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER, 2022 AT 2:00PM

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

Members Present (*in person*)

Cllr. Michelle Hall

Cllr. Adrian Henchy

Cllr. Deirdre Heney

Members Present (*online*)

Cllr. Daryl Barron

Cllr. Christy Burke

Cllr. Mary Callaghan

Cllr. Kieran Dennison

Cllr. Howard Mahony

Cllr. David Maxwell

Cllr. Ray McAdam

Cllr. Brian McKenna

Cllr. Kevin Meenan

Cllr. Patricia Roe

Cllr. Aoibhinn Tormey

Apologies

Cllr. Tom Behan

Cllr. Aiden Fitzpatrick

Cllr. Brigid Manton

Cllr. Emer Tóibín

Cllr. Gillian Toole

Not in attendance

Cllr. Séamus Coyle

Cllr. Sean Kelly

Cllr. Craig Lovett

Cllr. Séamas McGrattan

Cllr. Eoghan O'Brien

Cllr. Colm O'Rourke

Cllr. Trevor Smith

Cllr. Niamh Souhan

HSE Representatives Present (*in person*)

Mr. Liam McHale, Communications and Parliamentary Affairs, CHO Dublin North City & County

Ms. Martina O'Byrne – Head of HR, Midlands Louth Meath CHO

Mr. Dermot Monaghan, Chief Officer, Community Healthcare Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan, Sligo

Ms. Katherine Kellett, Regional Health Office – HSE DNE

Ms. Lorraine Timmons, Regional Health Office – HSE DNE

HSE Representatives Present (*online*)

Dr. Jack Lambert, Consultant in Infectious Diseases, Medicine and Sexual Health (GUM), Mater, Rotunda and UCD

Ms. Essene Cassidy, Head of Older Persons, CHO DNCC

Mr. Enda Doody, General Manager, Disability Service, CHO DNCC

Ms. Maebh Reynolds, Children's Disability Services Development Manager DNCC

Mr. Paul Gallen, Chief Ambulance Officer – North Leinster

Mr. Gearóid Rennicks, Communications & Press Officer, Ireland East Hospital Group

Cllr. Adrian Henchy chaired the meeting.

1. Adoption of minutes of meeting held on Monday, 26th September, 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 26th September, 2022 were adopted by the Forum on the proposal of Cllr. Ray McAdam and seconded by Cllr. Adrian Henchy.

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 Forensic Mental Health Service
- World Stroke Day: HSE Launch National Stroke Strategy
- Nursing Homes Support Scheme legislation updated
- HSE marks European Antibiotic Awareness Day
- Diabetic RetinaScreen highlights the importance of simple screening test for people with diabetes on World Diabetes Day
- New ADHD App launched to support adults with ADHD in Ireland
- HSE launches new Relationship & Sexuality resources to support parents to have ongoing conversations with their children, adolescents and young adults
- HSE supports Adult Safeguarding Day
- New Confidential Recipient appointed
- Schedule of Meetings 2023
- Christmas Message

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

Request for presentation on Primary Care Centres.

Presentation on Primary Care Centres will be progressed for early 2023.

National Forensic Mental Health Service - Details on plans for Dundrum site.

A response will be provided.

National Forensic Mental Health Service - Timeline for Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (FCAMHS).

A response will be provided.

Wait time for transfer from prison to mental health facility.

A response will be provided.

Pathways for young girls 16-18 years in mental health emergencies.

A response will be provided.

The report was noted by the Forum.

3. Presentation on Lyme Disease

Dr. Jack Lambert, Consultant in Infectious Diseases, Medicine and Sexual Health (GUM), Mater, Rotunda and UCD, gave a presentation to members on Lyme Disease.

The following outlines comments and queries raised by members and responses from Dr. Lambert.

Clarification on reasons why testing is not optimal in Ireland and what can be done to heighten awareness among the GP profession.

There remains a challenge with imperfect diagnostics in Ireland. As there are no PCRs, a lot of the medical community will determine as post-infectious. However, after a course of antibiotics, the patient is still ill. There is a need to continue training of GPs in awareness of tick symptoms.

Incidence of Lyme Disease in Northern Ireland.

Lyme Disease is a problem throughout the EU, therefore, in both Northern and Southern Ireland.

Request that Lyme Disease be included in plans for Long Covid clinics.

It was agreed that a letter would be issued on behalf of the Forum to the Minister for Health and CEO of the HSE outlining the request.

4. Motions

That the HSE report on the implementation of the Progressing Disability Services policy across North Dublin with reference to the functioning of each CDNT, i.e. number of referrals received, number of referrals accepted, number of children on waitlist, number of active cases, current estimated wait time, current staffing levels and vacancies, and the implementation of 1.) National Policy on Access to Services for Children & Young People with Disability & Developmental Delay and 2.) National Policy on Prioritisation of Referrals to Children's Disability Network Teams within these teams.

Cllr. Aoibhinn Tormey

Proposed: Cllr. Aoibhinn Tormey

Seconded: Cllr. Howard Mahony

Cllr. Tormey gave some background as to the reasons why she submitted the Motion outlining that her constituents have been raising concerns and are frustrated in relation to access to Children's Disability Network Teams across all age ranges. She spoke about older children on the wait list 'aging-out' and stated that there is a huge crisis in terms of children being able to access timely assessment and intervention, and the need for greater priority in this area.

Cllr. Tormey referred to the statement in the response "*Since the CDNTs were established in CHO DNCC, there have been some noticeable improvements evident in the level of service provided to children with disabilities and their families*" and asked whether this is based on service user feedback or if it is related to the number of children now open to a service.

Cllr. Tormey agreed with challenges in relation to recruitment and stated that the high level of staff turnover is having a very negative impact on the care families are receiving. She stressed the importance of examining the reasons why staff do not want to stay and why there is such a high level of staff turnover. Excluding the targeted international recruitment campaign, Cllr. Tormey asked if any other initiatives have been explored, for example, a commitment agreement for sponsorship of trainee posts.

In referring to the numbers of open cases, numbers of allocated clinical staff, those on a team and those working, Cllr. Tormey raised concerns in relation to the monitoring of staff health and wellbeing as regards staff burnout due to the huge workload and given the complexities of some cases.

Cllr. Tormey also spoke about determining between complex case and non-complex cases and the children who do not fit either Primary Care or the CDNT and those who do not get accepted to one service as they are on a wait list for another. The councillor expressed interest in the Integrated Children's Services Forum and the numbers that are currently operational at present and sought clarity on when information sessions took place and with whom.

Cllr. Tormey welcomed Primary Care now taking on the role of assessments and asked for an update on the implication of the recent High Court ruling and whether assessments will need to be repeated.

In relation to the recommendation that families are encouraged to contact the CDNT if there is any change in their circumstances that may affect their priority level, Cllr. Tormey sought clarification on how this is communicated to families, whether families are aware of the categories with regards to the policy and how this is being implemented. The councillor spoke of many families in crisis, unable to access any service, who have gone private to avail of a timely assessment and intervention for their child.

Mr. Enda Doody, General Manager, Disability Service, CHO DNCC, responded to the comments and queries from Cllr. Tormey and in terms of the level of service being provided, and clarified that the statement is based on previous attendees combined to early intervention services and school age disability services, and that the total now attending PDS services has increased across the board, irrespective of vacant live waits, vacancies and new referrals.

Mr. Doody, referring to vacancies, recruitment and retention of staff, outlined that it is massively challenging at the moment across all disciplines. He also informed the councillor that there is a sponsored program at the moment for trainee psychologists, and this may be examined in terms of rolling out to other disciplines. He outlined that the HSE have invested in a significant ongoing recruitment campaign, and also internationally. However, unfortunately, at present, some networks are operating at only 50% staffing levels, which is clearly not tenable in the long term.

In responding to staff health and wellbeing, he agreed that workloads can be very challenging and confirmed that there is a national training program being set up specifically in relation to staff health and wellbeing.

Mr. Doody informed the meeting that he is the Chairperson of the local CHO group on the National Access Policy, which also has representation from primary care services and he also gave an outline on the referral process, including complex cases, open cases and variances in wait times between networks.

Mr. Doody spoke about the preliminary team assessment that was deemed invalid by the High Court earlier in the year, stating that it has presented further administrative issues as a significant number of cases will need a full reassessment under the Disability Act. He stated that CHO DNCC are working through this process and some families have elected to not go ahead with a full assessment of need as they are aware of the appropriate pathway for their children.

As regards, prioritisation criteria, this is being communicated to all families through the Family Forums and following the most recent event in Finglas, there are now follow up phone calls being made to parents, which was an undertaking given on the day. Also, prioritisation criteria is available through the website. However, it is worth noting that any priority given will be solely based on clinical need.

Mr. Doody referenced older children ageing out, stating this cohort represents a very small number of overall network cases.

Cllr. Aoibhinn Tormey sought further clarification on referrals and the Integrated Children's Services Forum. Mr. Doody explained that there are two ICSFs – North Dublin and Dublin North City & Central. One ICSF was held approximately two months ago, with two further dates planned but there have been no referrals to that Forum. He stated that, ideally, all issues should be resolved locally, but where a formal mechanism is required to resolve an issue, the matter is then referred to the appropriate ICSF.

Cllr. Tormey requested information on the Family Forums including who is invited to them. Mr. Doody stated that St. Michael's House, Central Remedial Clinic (CRC) and Avista are rolling out their Family Forums. The HSE oversee their direct run networks. He stated that all the parents are invited to the Forums. Cllr. Tormey requested that public representatives be invited to future events. Mr. Doody agreed to follow up on the request.

Cllr. Michelle Hall joined the conversation and spoke in relation to disability forums in Louth Meath. She outlined a particular case of a child receiving a diagnosis of ASD and then being dropped from the disability team, even though there were ongoing behavioural issues, and being moved to this new forum. She outlined that the parents were informed that the child was being moved to this new forum by way of a letter, stating that the child no longer required any further services, and there was no discussion with the parents. The parents have been told to attend their GP should further services be required. Cllr. Hall stated that the family are back at square one, with child due to transition to secondary school, and no support services. She spoke about the family again being put on waiting lists up to five years and the lack of therapists in the area.

Cllr. Hall also spoke about the lack of child centeredness in decisions and the fact that the child had no self-determination skills throughout the process to feed into his own and health and wellbeing.

It was pointed out by Cllr. Hall, that while her account was an individual case, she was trying to generalise that children do not have a voice and are basically abandoned by care teams, leaving families without any support from the primary care team.

Mr. Doody, in noting the individuality of the case, recommended that Cllr. Hall make contact with Midlands Louth Meath CHO to request a family meeting on the case itself. On a general note, Mr. Doody informed the meeting that Family Forums present an opportunity to allow the child a better voice, however, each child presenting will have their own set of unique issues, some very well able to advocate for themselves and others perhaps not so. He outlined that in many instances of complex cases, particularly cases being referred to network teams, children would generally not be in a position to advocate for themselves.

Cllr. Hall expressed concern that the cohort of children able to advocate for themselves are now not being seen as a priority within the Children's Disability Network Teams and that only complex cases are being seen.

Mr. Doody stated that the purpose of the network configuration is to refer purely complex cases to the Children's Disability Network Teams and non-complex cases to primary care services.

He added that in the event of a dispute as to where the appropriate pathway for a child best sits, this is referred to the Integrated Children Services Forum meetings in order that agreements can be made on the appropriate pathway and needs of the child.

That this Forum be given a presentation on the monies outstanding (totalling €104.9m) from the HSE to Dublin City Council for the provision of emergency ambulance services in the Dublin region by Dublin Fire Brigade.

Cllr. Deirdre Heney & Cllr. Christy Burke

Proposed: Cllr. Deirdre Heney
Seconded: Cllr. Christy Burke

Cllr. Deirdre Heney welcomed the opportunity to debate the issue around disagreement on funding between the National Ambulance Service (NAS), Dublin Fire Brigade (DFB) and Dublin City Council (DCC) and outlined the basis for her Motion. She stated that two agreements have now been backtracked on by the HSE and outlined that emergency ambulance services in the Dublin region encompass four local authorities and the outstanding amount of €104.9m is based on an agreed figure arising from a mediation process between DCC and the HSE in 2013. However, the HSE have not paid the yearly agreed amount to date.

Cllr. Heney referenced the response to the Motion *"The Review of Ambulance Services in Ireland conducted in 1993 identified a series of issues relating to the duplication of ambulance services in the Dublin area. The current funding support arrangements between the HSE and DCC are grounded in the recommendations of that review"*, stating that the hard-fought mediation process which took place in 2013 has been ignored.

In reference to the arrangements prescribed in the Review and outlined in C&AG reports, specifically control and dispatch arrangements, Cllr. Heney stated that this is the second agreement the HSE entered into with DCC and she outlined the details of a further mediation process, agreed with unions in 2019, on the dispatching of ambulance services and other key issues. She stated that this process resulted in an agreement between the HSE and DCC and in March 2021, the four Dublin Local Authorities, the HSE and the NAS agreed to establish a joint Dublin Fire Brigade and National Ambulance Service implementation group and project team to implement the recommendations of this mediation process. However, by October 2021 the HSE had decided they were not supporting the agreement to implement the recommendations.

Cllr. Heney stated that if the HSE had facilitated the implementation of the agreed resolution which flowed from the mediation process, the HSE would not now be issuing responses on control and dispatch agreements and she questioned why the HSE and the NAS are continuing to play games with this situation after two State bodies have already sat down and worked out an agreement.

Cllr. Heney expressed frustration at the response and the news that the issue has now been referred to Government departments to resolve, and stated she is not hopeful of a solution as the two previous agreements have been renegeged on by the HSE.

The councillor stated that a breach of agreement has occurred and while the agreement in place may not have been perfect, it had been agreed by both sides.

Cllr. Heney added that DCC and the citizens of Dublin, very much value the emergency ambulance service that Dublin Fire Brigade is providing and wish the service to remain, but the HSE need to honour the agreement that was made in order that everyone can move on and we can all have a proper ambulance service.

Cllr. Christy Burke seconded the Motion and stated that the HSE, in breaking previous agreements going back as far as 1993, was insulting DCC, and are now going back into talks to reach a resolution which has already been agreed. He also added that the amount now owing by the HSE is €104.9m.

He stated that members have been raising the issue over a number of years and are still getting procrastination on a definitive decision in relation to the repayments of the funding, which is totally unacceptable.

Cllr. Burke asked that the Forum request Mr. Stephen Mulvany, Acting CEO and Ms. Mellany McLoone, Chief Officer, CHO DNCC, to attend the next meeting of the Forum to provide a realistic and honest response as to when payments to DCC will be put in place for ambulance services. He ended by stated that he was totally disappointed and confused with the response.

Mr. Paul Gallen, Chief Ambulance Officer – North Leinster, acknowledged that the response was brief, in that it was his understanding that no agreement was reached and therefore, it has now been escalated to ministerial level. He stated that the matter is now outside the scope of the HSE and all parties will have to wait on the outcome of discussions.

Cllr. Mary Callaghan thanked her Dublin City Council colleagues for submitting the Motion and expressed shock at the response provided. She outlined that the issue continues to be raised at almost every meeting of the Council's Finance Committee and the Council strongly feel this money is owed to them.

Cllr. Heney requested an update on the current position of the Task & Finish Group and whether any meetings have been set up to date. Mr. Gallen stated that it is his understanding that both departments are currently in discussions.

Cllr. Adrian Henchy, Chairperson, asked if Mr. Gallan would be in a position to return to the Forum with an update on discussions. Mr. Gallan stated that the matter is at ministerial level but he could certainly request an update for the Forum.

Cllr. Heney stated that it would be helpful if both departments could be requested to provide details on the officials that are setting up the process. She outlined that she has accepted that the monies will never be paid by the HSE due to previous agreements not being honoured, and that it is a very serious matter and is absolutely appalling behaviour by a state organisation.

Cllr. Burke supported Cllr. Heney's request and further requested an update from Mr. Stephen Mulvany, A/CEO, on the current position of the Group, how long it is expected to last, if any meetings have taken place and the Terms of Reference for the Group.

Mr. Gallen again stated that the matter is outside the HSE's scope of authority and is now at departmental level. He extended an open invitation to councillors to visit the NAS National Emergency Operations Centre which would give a better understanding on

some other elements in the reports, i.e., the control dispatch arrangements, the clinical governance arrangements and the performance reporting arrangements and how the actual control centre works.

It was agreed that a letter would issue to the Minister for Health, the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Mr. Mulvany, A/CEO on behalf of the Forum with the above requests.

5. Questions

There was no business under this item.

6. Chairperson's Correspondence

Cllr. Adrian Henchy, Chairperson informed the members of the resignation of Cllr. Aisling O'Neill from the Regional Health Forum. The Regional Health Office has written to Meath County Council to seek a replacement for Cllr. Byrne on the Forum.

Cllr. Henchy also informed the meeting that the Regional Health Office are still awaiting a nominee from Louth County Council to replace Cllr. John Sheridan on the Forum.

7. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Regional Health Forum - Dublin North East will take place on Monday, 23rd January, 2023.

Signed:

_____ **Chairperson**