

Regional Health Forum South West

MINUTES

MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH WEST

Thursday, 2nd October 2025 at 11am
Venue: Council Chambers, Cork County Council, County Hall, Cork

Present:

Cllr Ann Marie Ahern
Cllr Ann Bambury
Cllr Deirdre Ferris*
Cllr Dominic Finn
Cllr Finbarr Harrington Chairperson
Cllr Pat Hayes
Cllr Jackie Healy Rae*

Cllr Peter Horgan
Cllr Margaret McDonnell
Cllr Marie Moloney
Cllr Norma Moriarty*
Cllr Gary O'Brien*
Cllr John Sheehan
Cllr Mikey Sheehy*

* attended online

Apologies:

Cllr Danny Collins
Cllr Colm Kelleher
Cllr Fiona Kerins
Cllr Mary Lenihan Foley
Cllr Tony O'Shea

In Attendance:

- Ms Priscilla Lynch, HSE South West Integrated Healthcare Area Manager, Cork South and West
- Mr Jonathan Hoare, HSE South West Director of Communications and Public Affairs
- Members of the HSE Regional Health Forum Office staff

Mr Jonathan Hoare, HSE South West Director of Communications and Public Affairs welcomed the members to the inaugural meeting of the Regional Health Forum South West. He thanked Cllr. Ann Marie Ahern for her stewardship of the Regional Health Forum South for the past 15 months. Mr Hoare proceeded to Chair the meeting for agenda item 1.

1. Election of Chairperson

Cllr. Finbarr Harrington was proposed by Cllr Pat Hayes and seconded by Cllr Ann Marie Ahern. As there were no other nominations, Jonathan Hoare deemed Cllr Harrington to be elected as the first Chairperson of the Regional Health Forum South West.

Election of Vice-chairperson

Cllr. Dr. John Sheehan was proposed by Cllr Ann Marie Ahern and seconded by Cllr Dominic Finn. As there were no other nominations, Jonathan Hoare deemed Cllr Dr. Sheehan to be elected as Vice-chairperson of the Regional Health Forum South West.

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Cllr. Harrington thanked those who had nominated him for the position and thanked the members for his election as chairperson. He welcomed the two new members to the Forum and said he looked forward to working with all the members and with HSE management for the coming year. Cllr Harrington thanked Cllr. Ahern for her leadership of the previous Forum saying she was both fair and accessible to all members during her time as chairperson. Cllr Harrington then led the members in passing a vote of sympathy to the late Cllr. Patrick Gerard Murphy and paid tribute to his work on behalf of the people he served.

2. Adoption of Standing Orders

On the proposal of Cllr Pat Hayes, seconded by Cllr Peter Horgan, the draft Standing Order were adopted by members.

3. Chairperson's Correspondence

No correspondence to note

4. Committees

The first meeting of the Regional Health Forum South West Committee will take place in Tralee at 11am on Thursday October 9th. It was agreed that the business of the Committee would be discussed at the first meeting and members would have an opportunity to provide input into how they would like the Committee to operate.

5. Notices of Motion

(a) Cllr Jackie Healy Rae moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

“Can the HSE outline what engagement they have had with any state agency or local authority in relation to the St Finian’s site in Killarney and can the HSE outline what works are currently being carried out on the site and in the building?”

A written response from Mr Daniel Clifford, Director of Estates, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted. Cllr. Healy-Rae expressed his dissatisfaction with the lack of detail in the response provided and requested further information on the discussions which had taken place with both Kerry County Council and the Land Development Agency as both of these bodies have a requirement for land in the Killarney area. Ms. Priscilla Lynch agreed to revert to the members with the information requested. At the request of Cllr. Marie Moloney, she also agreed to revert with confirmation of whether or not the HSE intends to develop a Primary Care Centre on the grounds of St. Finan’s.

(b) Cllr Tony O’Shea moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

“That the HSE provide an update on the Sale of Heatherside Hospital, Doneraile, Co Cork.”

A written response from Mr Daniel Clifford, Director of Estates, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted.

Deferred to the next meeting.

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(c) Cllr Peter Horgan moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"That the HSE will work with the local authorities under its remit of this Forum to expand pilot projects already in existence for free suncream dispensers in public parks and roll out pilot projects in those local authorities where none currently exist and to detail the cost of such pilots and the cost of expansion plans that could be achieved."

A written response from Ms. Priscilla Lynch, Integrated Health Area Manager, Cork South and West, was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Horgan thanked the HSE for its partnership with Cork City Council on this pilot and noted that other local authorities are looking to replicate the initiative. He asked that the pilot be costed with a view to developing a business case to have the initiative established on a permanent footing and rolled out to other areas. Several members spoke in support of Cllr Horgan's motion and called for the initiative to be extended to cover playgrounds, and that it be made available all year around.

Ms. Lynch thanked the members for their support of the initiative and confirmed that HSE South West would be happy to work with the local authorities in Cork and Kerry in developing a business case on this and other similar initiatives for the region. It is hoped that the feedback from the National Cancer Control Programme's national pilot providing Sunscreen Dispensers between 2022 and 2024 will also strengthen the case for a national roll out of such initiatives.

On request for research conducted re prevalence of skin cancer and the cost of providing treatment for same; Ms Lynch will engage specifically with local cancer prevention services seeking the required detail regarding research being carried out. She will make this information available to the members and it will also be used to inform any business case put together by the HSE and the local authorities.

(d) Cllr John Sheehan moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"That in view of the improvement in chronic care management of patients with Type 2 Diabetes, Asthma and Heart Disease due to the Chronic Disease Management Programme, that the HSE would look to extend the eligibility of the programme to Non Medical Card/Doctor Visit Card Holders'. This would be in line with the SlainteCare Objectives."

A written response from Ms. Priscilla Lynch, Integrated Health Area Manager, Cork South and West, was circulated to members and noted. Cllr. Dr. Sheehan stated that the HSE's Chronic Disease Management (CDM) programme has been a great success, resulting in reduced length of stay in hospitals, a structured monitoring of patients and better overall outcomes for service users. For that reason he would like to see the programme extended to non-medical card holders who are registered with GPs. A number of other Councillors also spoke in support of the motion. Ms Lynch said that as it is a national programme, it is not within local management's remit to extend the programme but that she will bring the view of the Forum members to the national team. Ms. Lynch also briefed the members on discussions at national level to extend the CDM programme to other specialties and stated that HSE South West would welcome any such proposal.

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(e) Cllr Marie Moloney moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

“That the HSE would ensure that appropriate intervention and treatment pathways be provided to patients with addiction, who present at an Emergency Department with mental health issues and are admitted if appropriate.”

A written response from Ms Julie O'Neill, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager Kerry, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr Moloney expressed concern that there is a perception among the public that people with an addiction will not be admitted to an acute mental health unit. Ms. Lynch assured the members that there is no such policy in place and that there are clear criteria set out for admission to an acute unit. She stated that each case presenting is clinically triaged to determine the best course of action and that the decision on whether or not a patient requires admission is entirely a clinical one. Cllr Moloney welcomed this assurance. She stated that people attending an ED are often in a very vulnerable state and staff should make every effort to ensure that they have adequate supports in place when they are being discharged from the ED. Cllr Ferris stated that every ED should have a full Mental Health Team and a full addiction team in place. Ms. Lynch agreed to forward details of the Dual Diagnosis teams in place with each of the EDs in Cork and Kerry.

6. Questions

(a) Cllr Peter Hogan put forward the following question:

“To ask the number of public hydrotherapy pools available in the Cork and Kerry area, the cost of installing and operating a hydrotherapy pool and will the HSE engage with Swim Ireland and Cork City Council to provide a hydrotherapy pool component in the Gus Healy Pool in Cork as part of the new swim strategy there.”

A written response from Ms Julie O'Neill, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager Kerry, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted. Cllr. Horgan welcomed the HSE's willingness to engage with Cork City Council and Swim Ireland on progressing this initiative and will follow up with Ms. Lynch on this matter.

(b) Cllr John Sheehan put forward the following question:

“To ask the HSE to give an Update of the proposed Primary Care Centre for Blarney.”

A written response from Mr Daniel Clifford, Director of Estates, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr. Dr. Sheehan welcomed the response and said he hope the target date of Q4 2028 could be achieved as this facility was badly need in the area. Ms. Lynch confirmed that tender submissions have been received and will be assessed by October 8th.

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(c) Cllr Marie Moloney put forward the following question:

“Can members be advised as to why there is an extraordinary delay in the opening of the new Nursing Facility in Killarney and can we now given a proposed opening date.”

A written response from Ms Julie O'Neill, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager Kerry, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Moloney said that she was not

Cllr. Moloney expressed her disappointment that this project has been delayed and that no adequate reason for the delay has been provided. Ms. Lynch stated that the unit is being built under the Public Private Partnership model and has not yet been handed over to the HSE. The HSE has been assured that the unit is being built to the highest standard and will be fully compliant with HIQA standards and regulations. She will arrange for a more detailed explanation of the delays to be provided to the members at the upcoming South West Committee meeting.

6. Date and Time of next meeting – 6th November 2025 at 11am. Venue: Council Chambers, Cork County Council, County Hall, Cork.