

MINUTES **MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH**

Thursday, 19th of May 2022 at 2pm
Venue: Council Chambers, County Hall, Victoria Cross, Cork

Present:

Clr Audrey Buckley*
Clr Cathal Byrne
Clr Peter Cleere
Clr Declan Clune
Clr John Coonan
Clr Caroline Cronin*
Clr Michael Doran*
Clr Pat Dunphy
Clr Michael Foley
Clr Roger Kennedy
Clr Donal Kenny
Clr Garry Laffan
Clr Mary Lenihan Foley

Clr Eileen Lynch
Clr Michael McCarthy
Clr Susan McCarthy*
Clr Arthur McDonald
Clr Conor McGuinness
Clr Norma Moriarty*
Clr John O'Donoghue*
Clr Sean O'Donovan
Clr Jody Power
Clr John Sheehan*
Clr Mikey Sheehy*
Clr James Tobin*

*attended online

Apologies:

Clr Declan Burgess
Clr Mark Fitzgerald
Clr Pat Hayes
Clr Richie Molloy

In Attendance:

Mr Gerry O'Dwyer, Chief Executive Officer, South/South West Hospitals Group
Mr Michael Fitzgerald, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare
Ms Kate Killeen White, Chief Officer, South East Community Healthcare
Dr Arthur Jackson, Consultant Physician, Cork University Hospital
Members of the HSE South Forum Office staff

Cllr. Eileen Lynch welcomed everyone to the Regional Health Forum Meeting, and gave apologies on behalf of the Chairperson, Cllr Declan Burgess.

Prior to the start of the meeting, Cllr Lynch welcomed a new member Cllr Caroline Cronin, Cork County Council replacing Cllr Katie Murphy and Cllr Declan Clune, Waterford County Council replacing Cllr Davy Daniels. In addition there have been a number of new members over recent months already welcomed to the Forum but Cllr Lynch again welcomed Cllr Michael Doran, Carlow County Council, Cllr Cathal Byrne, Wexford County Council and Cllr Michael Foley, Kerry County Council.

Cllr Lynch also advised Members of a new date in the diary at the request of Members:

- The Regional Health Forum Meeting to be held on the 24th March will take place on **2nd June 2022.**

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Thursday 24th of February 2022.

On the proposal of Cllr Roger Kennedy seconded by Cllr Mary Lenihan Foley, the minutes of the Forum meeting held on Thursday, 24th of February 2022 were approved and adopted by the members.

2. Chairperson's Correspondence
3. The next Committee Meetings will take place on:
 - South East Committee Meeting held on 18th of October 2022
 - South West Committee Meeting held on 20th of October 2022
4. Presentation on Long Covid to be given by Dr Arthur Jackson, Consultant Physician, Cork University Hospital.

Following the presentation, there were a number of questions from Members who requested that Dr Jackson return at a later date to provide an update this work.

5. Notices of Motion

(a) Cllr Eileen Lynch moved the following Motion, standing the name of Cllr Declan Burgess:

"That the HSE outlines the progress, if any, on the proposed new residential unit at Saint Patrick's Hospital, Cashel and the planning of this development."

A written response from Ms Kate Killeen White, Chief Officer, South East Community Healthcare was circulated to Members and noted. Ms Killeen White in response to a query from Cllr Kennedy stated that whilst this project remains listed on the capital plan and given the safe relocation of residential services to OLC, the project is not being prioritised for progression presently. Ms. Kate Killeen White outlined that there are competing projects such as Enhanced Community Care and Disability Services which require to be prioritised presently.

(b) Cllr Sean O'Donovan moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"That this Forum supports the Bandon Family Resource Centre (BFRC) in their request for being accommodated in the recently vacated Watergate centre (mental health resource centre) as their current accommodation is not fit for purpose and no suitable premises has been identified after a 12-month search."

A written response from Mr Michael Fitzgerald, Chief Officer, HSE Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr. O'Donovan acknowledged the written reply, however, he outlined the critical role of the Family Resource Centre and reiterated the need for new accommodation. Mr. Fitzgerald responded advising that whilst HSE Cork Kerry Healthcare has its own accommodation challenges and therefore in the first instance needs to prioritise our own services. Nonetheless Mr Fitzgerald also stated that Cork Kerry Community Healthcare would remain supportive of Bandon Family Resource Centre and if the position changes, the HSE would assist them if at all possible. Both Cllr Lenihan-Foley and Cllr Susan McCarthy supported this Motion.

(c) Cllr Michael Foley moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"That the HSE provide more respite beds for the catchment area of North Kerry."

A written response from Mr Michael Fitzgerald, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr Foley thanked Mr Fitzgerald for the comprehensive reply and clarified that his query related particularly to the availability of respite places for North Kerry patients with Alzheimer's who at times need to travel out of county for centre based respite. Cllr. Foley suggested that the HSE Cork Kerry Healthcare might purchase a former private Nursing Home in the locality for use as a respite facility. Mr. Michael Fitzgerald thanked the Cllr for providing clarification on this query. He advised that understandably demand for centre-based respite services very much reduced during the pandemic, but noted that requests are once again increasing. Mr Fitzgerald stated that ongoing renovation work in Community Hospitals has impacted on overall bed numbers including respite. As these beds come back on-stream, HSE Cork Kerry Healthcare will consider use and demand for same. Mr. Fitzgerald confirmed that there are no plans to purchase the former Nursing Home as referenced by Cllr Foley.

(d) Cllr Mikey Sheehy moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"That this Forum supports my call to support those persons and their families who are struggling with eating disorders in every way possible including the expansion of services to allow for clearer pathways to enter the HSE service and to access services once under the care of the HSE on an I going basis."

A written response from Mr Michael Fitzgerald, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr. Sheehy welcomed the written reply which he advised originated following a meeting in Tralee with advocated on Eating Disorders and particularly cited barriers for families and individuals in accessing services. Mr Fitzgerald stated that he was pleased to advise that there has been an expansion of service provision with increased resources received over the last number of years. He also explained that staffing levels are recommended through the national clinical programme and are also based on population numbers Mr. Fitzgerald did state that not all the approved posts have been filled given the ongoing recruitment challenges which are being experienced in all areas. This is a complex area

with increasing demand for services. Inpatient specialist services which are part of the overall patient journey can be accessed in locations across the country and work is ongoing nationally in relation to pathways of care.

(e) Cllr Cathal Byrne moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"To ask the HSE how many GP positions are currently vacant in Co. Wexford and for how long they have been vacant."

This was taken with question 6(d) below also submitted by Cllr Byrne.

6. Questions

(a) Cllr. Eileen Lynch put forward the following question in the name of Cllr Declan Burgess:

"Can HSE management brief the meeting on the replacement process of a Doctor at the Minor Injuries Unit at Our Lady's Hospital Cashel. Please advise on the situation that left this service fall short with the necessary staffing levels that led to the closure and how long this service will be closed."

A written response from Ms Kate Killeen White, Chief Officer, South East Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr Roger Kennedy thanked Ms Killeen for work undertaken to prioritise medical replacement cover particularly given the situation which arose with little notice. Ms Killeen White outlined that there are continuing challenges in sourcing medical cover. However the HSE South East Community Healthcare is committed to continuing to actively work to source and provide medical cover to facilitate the ongoing operation of the Cashel Minor Injuries Unit.

(b) Cllr. Mikey Sheehy put forward the following question:

"What is the process followed by the HSE to hire overseas consultant doctors as consultants in Ireland considering their previous experience and with consideration to licensing requirements from the Irish Medical Council. This being at a time when there is a severe shortage of this highly qualified cohort of medical professionals in Ireland."

A written response from Ms Eithne Fox, Assistant National Director of HR, HR Shared Services, National HR, was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr Sheehy in response to the written reply highlighted his concern for Consultants from overseas who may at times need to take a step back before full Consultant status is awarded to them in Ireland. This is of particular concern giving the challenges in recruitment and retention of medical staff. Mr Gerry O'Dwyer Chief Executive Officer South/South East Hospital Group advised Members that every effort is made locally to ensure that when someone is recommended by the Public Appointment Commission to ensure that the process is fair and transparent for the person taking up an appointment. Mr O'Dwyer also advised that any successful candidates who is recommended through the PAS cannot take up post unless they are fully registered and Garda vetted. Mr O'Dwyer advised Cllr Sheehy if there were any particular individual concerns he wanted to discuss they could do so offline.

(c) Cllr. John Coonan put forward the following question:

“What is the up to date position of HSE regarding the provision of public information for early detection, diagnosis and treatment of Lyme Disease.”

A written response from Dr Anne Sheehan, Director of Public Health, HSE South, was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr Coonan thanked Management for this written reply and advised that he put forward this question as he knew a person in Kilkenny who has lived with Lyme Disease for a long time. In addition May is World Lyme Awareness month which reminds us to be vigilant and to spread awareness among the general public to save lives. Cllr Coonan cited the positive campaign undertaken by Kerry County Council regarding signage and Lyme awareness. Cllr Coonan also voiced his strong support for any collaborative work between the Local Authorities and the HSE to raise public awareness.

Ms Kate Killeen White also encouraged Members to access the useful information on the HSE website. She also outlined to Members that there is strong integration and collaborative working ongoing between HSE South East Community Healthcare and the five Local Authorities across the South East. Ms Killeen White also advised Cllr Coonan that she would raise this matter with the Health & Wellbeing Unit within the South East.

(d) Cllr Cathal Byrne put forward the following question it was taken with Motion 4(e):

“To ask the HSE what % of GP positions in Co. Wexford are filled by people not on the specialist GP register.”

And

(e) Cllr Cathal Byrne moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

“To ask the HSE how many GP positions are currently vacant in Co. Wexford and for how long they have been vacant.”

A written response from Ms Kate Killeen White, Chief Officer, South East Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Byrne stated he was satisfied with the response.

7. Date and Time of next meeting – 2nd June 2022 at 2pm. Venue: Council Chambers, Cork County Hall, Victoria, Co Cork.