

MINUTES **MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH**

Thursday, 2nd of June 2022 at 2pm
Venue: Council Chambers, Cork County Council, Co Cork

Present:

Cllr Ann Marie Ahern*
Cllr Audrey Buckley*
Cllr Declan Burgess
Cllr Cathal Byrne
Cllr Peter Cleere
Cllr Declan Clune*
Cllr Caroline Cronin
Cllr Michael Doran*
Cllr Pat Dunphy*
Cllr Pat Fitzgerald
Cllr Michael Foley
Cllr Damien Geoghegan
Cllr Roger Kennedy

Cllr Donal Kenny
Cllr Garry Laffan
Cllr Mary Lenihan Foley*
Cllr Eileen Lynch
Cllr Michael McCarthy
Cllr Susan McCarthy*
Cllr Conor McGuinness
Cllr Norma Moriarty
Cllr John O'Donoghue*
Cllr Sean O'Donovan
Cllr Jody Power
Cllr John Sheehan*
Cllr James Tobin*

* attended online

Apologies:

Mr Michael Fitzgerald, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare

In Attendance:

Mr Gerry O'Dwyer, Chief Executive Officer, South/South West Hospitals Group
Mr Gabrielle O'Keefe, Head of Health, Wellbeing & Strategy, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare
Ms Kate Killeen White, Chief Officer, South East Community Healthcare
Members of the HSE South Forum Office staff

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Thursday 19th May 2022.

On the proposal of Cllr Roger Kennedy and seconded by Cllr Michael McCarthy, the minutes of the Forum meeting held on Thursday, 19th May 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 22nd July 2022 in Kilkenny
- South West Committee Meeting held on 20th October 2022 in Tralee

4. Notices of Motion

(a) Cllr Norma Moriarty moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

"That all possible be done to work with the National Ambulance Service, KCC and the Kerry Fire Service to site Ambulance Deployment vehicles in Killorglin and Sneem. This would ensure a much better coverage of our geographically challenging territory and result in far better response times."

A written response from Mr Nicky Glynn, Operations Officer Chief Officer, National Ambulance Service was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Moriarty acknowledged this reply. Cllr Moriarty outlined that it is important to take into account both the permanent population of the local area and the tourist population i.e. seasonal influx of people during peak holiday periods.

Mr. Gerry O'Dwyer Chief Executive Officer explained to Members that unfortunately it was not possible for Mr Glynn to attend the Forum Meeting due to prior engagement. Mr. O'Dwyer advised members that extra staff were being recruited across the HSE South region and that an advertisement will be put up on the website shortly to meet the demands of the ambulance service.

Mr. O'Dwyer duly acknowledged the integrated and timely response by relevant agencies including those who attended on the scene at a recent road incident involving a tourist bus in South Kerry.

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

"That the HSE would replace the bus/mini-van which recently fell into such a state of disrepair that it had to be disposed of, for Teach an Churaim Community Residence in Rathmore, County Kerry"

A written response Mr Michael Fitzgerald, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr O'Donoghue thanked Management for the reply. He stated to Members how important this replacement vehicle would be the residents and staff of Teach an Churaim. It is really important for people with mental health issues to be able to get out, make connections and be part of their community. In response Ms Gabrielle O'Keefe fully agreed with Cllr O'Donoghue on the need for transport for that Centre. The replacement vehicle has been ordered – given ongoing international factors impacting supply and logistics, it is not possible at this time to confirm a specific date for delivery. Nonetheless this is a positive development.

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

"Can this group confirm that all disciplines have now returned to a face to face pre Covid consultations at UHK and if not then which disciplines continue to provide virtual consultations?"

A written response from Mr Fearghal Grimes, General Manager, University Hospital Kerry was circulated to members and noted.

(d) Cllr Eileen Lynch moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

"Can the HSE please provide an update on post-covid visiting policy for relatives of patients in Cork hospitals and whether there will be any local or national changes to this in the short term."

A written response from Mr Gerry O'Dwyer, Chief Executive Officer, South/South West Hospital Group was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr Lynch thanked HSE Management for the comprehensive written reply. She followed up with further queries; in relation to Cork University Hospital and whether there was a limit on who can visit and whether family only could visit South Infirmary Hospital. Mr. Gerry O'Dwyer in reply advised that Hospital Management always take a broad view on this issue. Generally speaking visiting is predominantly for close family members although in certain individual instances nominated extended family or friends can visit (particularly where the patient may not have any close family members nearby). Mr. O'Dwyer advised Members to contact him if they have having particular individual queries or concerns in relation to visiting. The Hospital Group is very cognisant of patients' needs in this regard. As the South Infirmary Hospital is elective procedures, patients nominate their designated visitors beforehand.

(e) Cllr Arthur McDonald moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"That the full medical treatment, supports required and costs involved to those suffering from Sleep Apnea be covered by Medical Care holders."

This motion was deferred to the South East Committee Meeting.

5. Questions

(a) Cllr. Norma Moriarty put forward the following question:

"Can we please have an update on the primary care centre for Cahersiveen and some details on the range of services that will operate from that centre"

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

Cllr Moriarty thanked Management for this reply. However she voiced her concerns and urged HSE Management to find funding to get this Primary Care Centre Services over the

line in Caherciveen. The needs of the local population along with new community Members including a high number of displaced people from Ukraine requires this to be progressed in a timely manner.

Ms Gabrielle O’Keeffe in reply stated that whilst the HSE is committed to the Primary Care Centre in the Caherciveen area, however, the costs need to be commensurate with the cost of a standard Primary Care Centre. It is not possible to sign up to a cost rate outside the parameters of a standard Primary Care Centre. Ms O’Keeffe also stated that the Primary Care Team continues to develop in the area notwithstanding finalisation of the location of the Primary Care Centre.

Cllr. Moriarty concluded the discussion by reiterating that there is a need to secure funding for a Primary Care Centre in Caherciveen.

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

“In the aftermath of the HSE cyber-attack that this Forum calls for a full review of the HSE IT system, including virtual patient data storage, in an effort to provide an IT system that is fit for a modern healthcare service.”

A written response from Mr Fran Thompson, Chief Information Officer, eHealth HSE was circulated to members and noted.

(c) Cllr. Eileen Lynch put forward the following question:

“Can the HSE please provide an update on the current waiting list in Cork County for those approved for home help and either not receiving same or not receiving their full allocated hours and advise on the ongoing recruitment campaign in this area.”

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

Councillor Lynch thanked Management for this response and requested further clarification in relation to recruitment measures, breakdown of waiting lists i.e. new applicants approved and awaiting services and applicants in receipt of existing service or partial services approved for and awaiting additional service and the number of clients in receipt of full allocated hours in Cork.

Ms. Gabrielle O’Keeffe advised that she would follow up with relevant Head of Service and arrange for available information to be forwarded to Cllr. Lynch. Ms O’Keeffe also stated to Members that funding is not the main issue rather the availability of home support staff that is impacting on service levels. There are particular staffing challenges in some areas which can result in gaps in terms of home support hours approved and the provision of services (additional or new) to individuals. Ms O’Keeffe confirmed that recruitment is ongoing for home support staff in the Cork Kerry area. Private Providers are also experiencing significant staffing difficulties.

(d) Cllr Declan Burgess put forward the following question

“To ask the HSE management how many GP positions are vacant in County Tipperary and please give a detailed breakdown of which areas are experiencing these vacancies.”

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

Cllr. Burgess thanked Ms Killeen White for her response and outlined his concerns in relation to the level of GP shortages and what measures are being undertaken by the HSE to address this. Ms Killeen White stated that in the South East GP numbers are kept under continuous review. This is a national issue relating to supply and demand and it is acknowledged that there is a shortage of GPs in the speciality. It is particularly challenging in recruiting GPs into existing single-handed practices outside major urban areas. The HSE is working with ICGP to expand GP training places - however, GP training in Ireland is four years in duration - therefore whilst this may not be a 'quick' win, it is an essential step in the right direction.

Cllr Burgess also asked in relation to the level of services delivered by the Locum GPs as referenced in the written reply. Ms. Killeen White stated that it was her understanding that the Locum Doctors in Cahir and Cashel were full-time - however she would confirm this with South East Primary Care and arrange for a reply to issue directly to Cllr Burgess. Cllr. Burgess thanked Ms Killeen White for her response.

6. Date and Time of next meeting – 23rd June 2022 at 2pm. Venue: Council Chambers, Cork County Hall, Co Cork.