

MINUTES **MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH**

Thursday 20th February 2020 at 2pm
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, CORK

Present:

Clr Pat Barden
Clr Audrey Buckley
Clr Declan Burgess
Clr Peter Cleere
Clr John Coonan
Clr Davy Daniels
Clr Pat Dunphy
Clr Michael Gleeson
Clr Pat Hayes
Clr Willie Kavanagh
Clr Niall Kelleher
Clr Roger Kennedy
Clr Mike Kennelly

Clr Donal Kenny
Clr Mary Lenihan Foley
Clr Eileen Lynch
Clr Michael McCarthy
Clr Arthur McDonald
Clr John McDonald
Clr Conor McGuinness
Clr Richie Molloy
Clr Norma Moriarty
Clr Katie Murphy
Clr Sean O'Donovan
Clr Jody Power
Clr Mikey Sheehy
Clr Ted Tynan

Apologies:

Clr Danny Collins
Clr Mark Fitzgerald
Clr John Sheehan

In Attendance:

Dr Ger O'Callaghan, Chief Operations Officer, South/South West Hospitals Group
Mr Ger Reaney, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare
Ms Kate Killeen White, Chief Officer, South East Community Health Organisation
Mr Nicky Glynn, Chief Ambulance Officer, NAS
Dr Augustine Periere, Director of Public Health, HSE South
Members of the HSE South Forum Office staff

Cllr Ted Tynan through the Chairperson Cllr Arthur McDonald requested a to discuss a "Matter of Urgent Importance" in relation to a serious assault on a patient at Cork University Hospital and as it had arisen since the Regional Health Forum deadline for receipt of Notice Of Motion/Questions. Cllr. Tynan was advised that a written reply could be provided to him and he could raise at the next Forum meeting.

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Thursday 21st November 2019

On the proposal of Cllr Roger Kennedy, seconded by Cllr Davy Daniels, the Minutes of the Forum meeting held on Thursday, 21st November 2019 were approved and adopted by the members.

2. Chairperson's correspondence

Members were reminded to switch off mobile phones.

3. Committees

The next Committee meetings will be held on:

- (a) South East Committee Meeting held on 21st April 2020 in Kilkenny
- (a) South West Committee Meeting held on 23rd April 2020 in Tralee

4. Presentation on Nursing Home Support Scheme (Fair Deal).

5. Notices of Motion

(a) Cllr. Mike Kennelly moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"Can The HSE give an update on the completion of the Primary Healthcare Centre in Listowel and to list all the services to be available and are these positions being advertised or indeed filled."

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

Cllr. Kennelly thanked Mr. Reaney for his written reply and noted the positive reply. Mr. Ger Reaney acknowledged that the building will be important for the provision of both current and future services and one where staff can work together in a more integrated manner. Such developments are aligned to Slaintecare and the National Service Plan 2020. There was a query in relation to the role of community medical doctors which was clarified by Mr. Reaney - these community based medical practitioners mostly work in the area of child health, school immunization programmes and public health. Cllr. Kennelly asked about the provision of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Mr. Reaney outlined the provision of CAMHS Services in Kerry and highlighted the challenges in recruiting CAMHS Consultants both locally and nationally. Mr. Reaney stated that CAMHS are multi-disciplinary teams comprising a range of disciplines and that their work will continue. He advised that Cork Kerry Healthcare continue to prioritise children within available resources.

(b) Cllr Michael Gleeson moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"That the HSE South calls on the HSE and the Department of Health to pay the salaries of the four Nurses employed by the Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association [IMNDA] as they are at present paid from money raised by means of voluntary donations to the IMNDA. These extremely dedicated Nurses cover extensive areas and save the State considerable expenditure by ensuring the sufferers can remain in their own homes for most of their illness."

A written response from Mr Ger Reaney, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Gleeson thanked Mr Reaney - he then highlighted that there were 360 people in Ireland living with Motor Neurone disease in the County of Kerry. This is a horrific condition affecting a person's brain and nerves that gets worse over time. Cllr. Gleeson stated that the recruitment of 4 Nurses had been achieved through significant community fundraising efforts which included the ice-bucket challenge, through Fr. Tony Coote (RIP), raffles and the IMDA. Cllr Gleeson requested that the HSE meet with a deputation in relation to a funding application on behalf of IMDA. Cllr John Coonan stated that the Forum should give their unanimous support and fully endorse this request by Cllr Gleeson.

(c) Cllr Jody Power moved the following motion, standing in his name:

"Officially there are over 200 vacancies at University Hospital Waterford. In reality the situation is much more stark. UHW is the most under-staffed large hospital in the country according to HSE figures.

*. UHW is a 381 bed hospital with 2290 members of staff, serving a population in the South East of 520,000

*. Limerick University Hospital is a 455 bed hospital with 2814 staff members, serving a population of 400,000 in the Mid West.

UHW has 551 staff LESS than LUH although of comparable bed size but serving a greater population.

*. Cork University Hospital has 635 beds and 4051 staff — although 50% greater in bed size than UHW, but incredibly, 100% more staff.

Given the undisputed 2019 HSE figures above, clearly demonstrating the flagrant bias against UHW and the people of the South East, I call upon the South/South West Hospital Group to establish a working group without delay to correct the glaring imbalance in Medical Care afforded to the people of the South East. I anticipate that reasonable progress in this endeavour will be made in reasonable time and before the regional HSE reorganisation due in 2021."

A written response from Dr Ger O'Callaghan, Mr Ger Reaney and Ms Kate Killeen White was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Power stated that the people of Waterford are very supportive of their hospital and want to ensure that there are sufficient resources in terms of staffing and service provision. Cllr Power highlighted the ongoing campaigns for service provision including the Hand on Heart Campaign (Hurling) and 24/7 Cardiac Care which partnered with Waterford F.C.

Cllr Daniels supported Cllr. Power's motion and also raised queries in relation to downgrading of University Hospital Waterford following the establishment of the Hospital Groups structure. He asked about plans for recruitment and for funding the CatLab. Cllr Conor McGuinness also supported this motion stating that services provided by staff at UHW are second to none and concerns in relation to recruitment and retention and the impact on waiting lists for patients across the South East. Other members to support this motion included Cllr John Coonan who highlighted vacancies across the country and concerns in relation the recruitment process and Cllr Pat Dunphy who also raised issues in relation to waiting lists.

Dr. Ger O'Callaghan responded by advising Cllr Power that the staffing figures outlined in his motion did not appear to accurate and comparable. He advised that there has been increase in both staff and budget allocation since the establishment of the Hospital Group in 2014. Dr. O'Callaghan acknowledged that the recruitment process is slow. Cllr Power he would review the figures he included in the Motion and revert.

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

"What measures have been planned and put in force by this Health Group to mitigate against the potential risks and possible hospital disruptions posed by the current strain of Coronavirus which has originated in China and have public health contingencies been finalised in this regard."

A written response from Dr Augustine Pereira, Director of Public Health was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr. Sheehy asked about the capacity of the public healthcare system (from hospital to general practice) to be able to respond to Coronavirus and also our level of preparedness for this. He also asked if there a sufficient supply of PPE in the service; How will the COVID patients be triaged; Is there sufficient lab capacity for testing; Is the lack of a respiratory specialist at UHK a concern considering COVID predominantly affects the respiratory system and finally he asked there sufficient ICU capacity. Dr Pereira outlined work at national level by the National Public Health Emergency Team, National Crisis Management Team and Regional Teams including the Winter Action Teams. He advised of ongoing work including the development of testing capability throughout the country. Cllr Power asked about cases that need to isolate and the capacity of the hospital.

Dr. Pereira advised that to date over 85 suspected cases have been tested and that we will continue to develop testing. Cllr Tynan asked about the need for PPE and whether there would be sufficient supplies for the health service to be able to deliver.

Dr. Ger O'Callaghan gave an update on the Hospitals i.e. there are 7 suspected cases in Cork University Hospital and 1 each in South Tipperary General Hospital and University Hospital Waterford. Public Health has been notified of suspected cases. He advised members of arrangements in place included decontamination room and facilities in CUH. Dr O'Callaghan stated that the Ambulance Service is well placed and that Respiratory Consultant and Infectious Disease Consultant are involved.

Ms. Killeen White advised members that there are currently no cases across community. From a management perspective there is ongoing work across the system in relation to Coronavirus.

(e) Cllr Audrey Buckley moved the following motion, standing in her name:

"There are an estimated 9,000 to 11,000 AEDS nationally, so you would assume that if you were having a heart attack a working serviced AED would not be far away. This is not the case. When a local community or sports group buys and inputs an AED it is this volunteer group that is responsible for maintaining and servicing the AED. Volunteers come and go and AEDs are not being serviced and maintained properly, it is an oversight that needs to be addressed. It could be a life that could be at risk because an AED was not serviced or maintained. This is of great concern to people and we need to address the servicing and maintaining of our AEDs. The location could be addressed with an App! Inaccessibility to an AED is a factor with some locked in cabinets, who has the key! An AED battery needs to be replaced every 3 to 5 years, the electrode pads have a life shelf

of 2 to 3 years. A potential asset we have in communities. Could one of the local Agencies have access and be involved in checking and maintaining them? Can we ask that question? As once AEDs are installed no one organisation is responsible for them and someone should have that responsibility, after all it could be a life and death situation."

A discussion was held in the Chambers. Cllr. Buckley advocated for a standard national system. Mr Nicky Glynn National Ambulance Service advised that there were currently 1500 registered defibrillators on the system. He advised that he was unsure whether any one person could take responsibility for all AEDs and that community involvement is key.

(f) Cllr Roger Kennedy moved the following motion, standing in his name:

"When will an Audiologist be appointed in South Tipperary?"

A written response from Ms Kate Killeen White was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr Kennedy asked about waiting lists and the number of HSE Audiologists in the South East. Ms Killeen White replied that this is Regional Service and that clients are firstly prioritised by clinical need and then by date of referral. Ms. Killeen White advised that she would arrange for further information to be sent to Cllr Kennedy.

6. Questions

(a) Cllr. Michael Gleeson put forward the following question:

"As a new community hospital is planned for Killarney, can the HSE South inform if there are plans prepared or in preparation for the future uses of the existing Saint Columbanus Home, the adjacent Community Hospital and adjoining lands?"

A written response from Mr Ger Reaney was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Gleeson thanked Mr Reaney for his reply and asked him to confirm the date and interaction with other agencies. The Community Nursing Unit will replace the District Hospital and the residential part of St. Columbanus. It is understood that a decision in relation to the planning permission is expected shortly.

(b) Cllr. Jody Power put forward the following question:

"Currently, there is a sporadic Cardiac Care facility at UHW due to the on-going maintenance programme now underway. The proposed 12 hour Cardiac Care facility is currently in a planning stage and not due on stream until Q1:2021. The required 24/7 Cardiac Care unit, much sought after and necessary, is but an unattainable aspiration at this stage.

Given the depressing state of Cardiac Care affairs in the South East at present, I request that you give urgent attention to Recommendation 3.4 of the Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest report, to which the HSE is a party, and establish forthwith a strategy to allow the full-time Waterford Fire Service respond to Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest emergencies exclusively. The required training and resources are at hand - all that's required is the leadership for its attainment. Your positive response to this request would be very much welcomed by all in the South East - 520,000 poorly served people."

A written response from Dr Ger O'Callaghan was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr Power indicated that he was not satisfied with the reply and why could the Fire Service in Waterford not be able to respond to cardiac arrests? Dr Ger O'Callaghan explained further that the Fire Service is within the remit of Waterford Local Authority.

(c) Cllr Mikey Sheehy put forward the following question:

"To ask this Forum to support paramedic staff working within the HSE who are essential to the delivery of frontline medical services. The service is now stretched to breaking point and staff from within need every support possible to continue to deliver this crucial service."

A discussion was held in the chambers. Mr. Nicky Glynn outlined how the model for Ambulance Services has changed with on-call being replaced by a full-time service across the South. He highlighted key elements of a modern ambulance service including staff, vehicles, central control, clinical governance. He outlined development in relation to staff education towards advanced paramedic roles. For the 5 years the Ambulance Service has recruited to capacity i.e. 110 per year. The service is strategically moving towards a Mobile Medical Service. With regard to Cllr Sheehy's query, Mr. Glynn advised that having a Central Control which knows where all vehicles are ensures that the nearest available resource is utilised in emergencies. Mr Glynn stated that increased clinical skills and governance levels have developed across the Ambulance Service. Performance will be monitored as part of the 2020 Service Plan. Cllr Niall Kelleher raised his concerns in relation to the availability and accessibility of ambulances for rural communities and the need for additional resources. Mr. Glynn replied stating that the current model is very dynamic deployment model and that the Control Centre is responsible for strategically placing vehicles. There will always be challenges where there are a number of service demands. Mr. Glynn advised of the training schedule for call centre staff and particularly in relation to categorisation of calls.

(d) Cllr. Roger Kennedy put forward the following question:

"When will the Landsdowne Road Agreement pay restoration for all Section 39 Agencies be funded and can the HSE give a commitment that HIQA requirements will be met financially by HSE for Section 39 Agencies?"

A written response from Ms Deborah Smullen, Ms Kate Killeen White and Mr Ger Reaney was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Kennedy asked why Section 39 agencies received cuts to funding as they were not part of FEMPI legislation.

Mr. Ger Reaney replied explaining that in line with government policy in relation to funding - Section 39 agencies are not considered public sector employees. By that nature commitments cannot be given outside government public pay policy. Ms Killeen White agreed stating that public pay agreements cannot be contradicted. Management advised that following the economic crash and the impact on public finances, it was necessary to apply savings across the healthcare system.

Ms Killeen White also outlined how some Section 39 agencies are also facing additional costs with HIQA requirements and that those agencies should continue to engage with the HSE.

7. Date and Time of next meeting - 26th March 2020 at 2pm in Council Chambers, County Hall, Cork.