

MINUTES **MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH**

Thursday, 7th November 2024 at 11am
Venue: Meeting Room, Floor 16, County Hall, Cork

Present:

Cllr Ann Marie Ahern **Chairperson**

Cllr Declan Barry

Cllr Tomas Breathnach*

Cllr Fergal Browne*

Cllr Cathal Byrne*

Cllr Danny Collins

Cllr John Coonan

Cllr Caroline Cronin*

Cllr David Dunne*

Cllr Pat Dunphy*

Cllr Deirdre Ferris*

Cllr Dominic Finn

Cllr John Fleming

Cllr Ger Frisby

Cllr Damian Geoghegan

Cllr Finbarr Harrington

Cllr Peter Horgan

Cllr Roger Kennedy

Cllr Fiona Kerins*

Cllr Mary Lenihan Foley

Cllr Margaret McDonnell

Cllr Norma Moriarty *

Cllr Marie Murphy *

Cllr John O'Leary

Cllr Daniel Pender *

Cllr Liam Quaide*

Cllr Mikey Sheehy

Cllr Frank Staples

Cllr Joe Sullivan

Cllr Adrienne Wallace*

Cllr Adam Wyse

*** attended online**

Apologies:

Cllr Marie Moloney

In Attendance:

Dr Gerard O'Callaghan, Chief Operations Officer, South/South West Hospitals Group

Ms Tess O'Donovan, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare

Ms Priscilla Lynch, IHA Manager, Cork North and East, HSE South West

Ms Roseanne Killeen, IHA Manager, HSE Dublin and South East *

Mr Gearoid Rennicks, Senior Press Officer, Ireland East Hospital Group*

Mr Rob Moriarty, Operations Manager, National Ambulance Service *

Ms Mairead Fennessy Communications and Public Affairs South East

Members of the HSE South Forum Office staff

Cllr Ann Marie Ahern opened the meeting welcomed both members and HSE Management.

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Thursday 18th July 2024

On the proposal of Cllr Ger Frisby seconded by Cllr Mikey Sheehy the minutes of the Forum meeting held on Thursday, 18th July 2024 were approved and adopted by the members.

2. Chairperson's Correspondence

3. Committees

The next Committee meetings will be held on:

- (a)** South East Committee Meeting held on 3rd December 2024 in Kilkenny
- (b)** South West Committee Meeting held on 5th December 2024 in Tralee

4. Notices of Motion

(a) Cllr Ann Marie Ahern moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

"Can the HSE please advise if a new permanent building is in plans for the ambulance service in Midleton, to include but not limited to staff quarters, offices and secure locked dispensing units as they are currently working out of portacabins"

A written response from Mr Rob Moriarty, National Ambulance Service was circulated to members and noted. NAS Management have recently met with HSE Estates to progress development of a new NAS Station in Midleton. Once suitable sites are identified, a full capital submission will be made to the National Capital and Property Steering Group for approval to proceed. Cllr Ahern thanked the NAS for their response and urged for this matter to be addressed as a priority.

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

"In order to achieve safe staffing levels as needed by frontline workers across the South West region, to detail the amount of vacancies, including all current sick leave absences, maternity leave, career break and all other leave categories in Cork University Hospital. The full cost of filling all those vacancies, apart from sick leave, to ensure safe staffing levels."

A written response from Dr Gerard O'Callaghan, Chief Operations Officer, South/South West Hospital Group was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Horgan thanked Management for this reply. He requested that further details be provided to him where available. In response Dr O'Callaghan outlined that some of the information requested may not be routinely captured by HR management systems.

(c) Cllr Declan Barry moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"Can the HSE give the people of Waterford and the South East, a time frame, of when we will have complete 24/7 cardiac care , at University Hospital Waterford?"

A written response from Dr Sinéad Reynolds, Integrated Health Manager, Waterford/Wexford, HSE Dublin and South East was circulated to members and noted.

Whilst acknowledging the written response, Cllr Barry indicate that it did not provide sufficient detail on timeframes. On behalf of Dr Reynolds, Ms Roseanne Killeen, Integrated Health Manager, Carlow/Kilkenny and South Tipperary, advised members that there since September 2022 there has been progression in cardiac care provision and coverage in University Hospital Waterford.

As outlined in the written response recruitment is ongoing and Hospital Management are working through any issues that arise as part of this process. Ms Killeen advised Cllr Barry that she would seek further information for the next meeting.

(d) Cllr Norma Moriarty moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"That the current age restrictions for Breast Check [50 – 69 years] and Bowel Screening [59 – 69 years] be changed to allow those aged 70+ years of age to avail of these cancer screening services and that a comprehensive awareness and promotional campaign, similar to Breast Check, follow to encourage all women to be breast aware and have screening mammograms."

A written response from the Communications Department, National Screening Service was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Moriarty thanked Management for their reply.

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

"That this Forum supports the delivery of a standalone Oncology unit for cancer patients in the south west on the grounds of UHK and requests an urgent update regarding the timelines attached to the project, specifically requesting a completion date."

A written response from Ms Mary Fitzgerald, General Manager, University Hospital Kerry was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr Sheehy thanked Management for the written reply. However he was very frustrated to note that the Project is still in the same position Stage 1 with no movement. Cllr Sheehy asked for clarity and a more detailed response. Dr Gerard O'Callaghan, Chief Operations Officer, South/South West Hospital Group stated that he would follow up further with HSE Estates.

(f) Cllr Danny Collins moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"I'm calling on the HSE to open a Dialysis Unit in Bantry General Hospital."

A written response from Ms Deirdre O'Keeffe, A/Chief Executive Officer, Cork University Hospital Group was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Collins outlined the need for a Dialysis Unit in Bantry Hospital – particularly given the considerable hardship for dialysis patients from the area in terms of distances and time to access their treatment. Cllr Finbarr Harrington supported Cllr Collins in this Motion. Dr Gerard O'Callaghan advised that Renal Dialysis is a specialised service which is not usually located in a Level 2 Hospital (Bantry General Hospital). It is unlikely that this service as currently provided will change in the near future. Dr O'Callaghan noted Cllr Collins's concerns and advised he would bring to the attention of Hospital Management.

(g) Cllr Dominic Finn moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"Could we be given a date for the full opening of the Cobh Primary Care Centre including the existing Cobh Medical Centre moving to this new Primary Care Centre in Ticknock, Cobh."

A written response from Ms Tess O'Donovan, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Finn was pleased to note that services would commence in the new Primary Care Centre imminently on a phased basis. Tess O'Donovan Chief Officer agreed that this would be very positive for overall improved patient experience. It is anticipated that Dental Services and some other service would move in to the Primary Care Centre in the New Year once the required dental chairs and equipment were in situ.

(h) Cllr Mary Lenihan Foley moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

"Asking HSE for full update on the future plans for St Raphael's Centre Youghal"

Cllr Mary Lenihan Foley

A written response from Ms Tess O'Donovan, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Mary Lenihan Foley thanked Management for this very detailed comprehensive reply - she welcomed this positive update.

(i) "To ask how many Caredocs operate a centralised call centre for patients trying to contact them and the rationale for same."

Cllr Fergal Browne

A written response from Ms Ann Marie Lanigan, Head of Service, Primary Care, South East Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Browne whilst acknowledging the written reply outlined his dissatisfaction with the centralised system and poor experience and delays in getting through. Ms Killeen advised Cllr Browne that it is a very busy time for the healthcare system and Out of Hours GPs and particularly during seasonal peaks with increased demands. Roseanne Killeen IHA Manager asked Cllr Browne to bring any individual complaints or issues in relation to delays with the call system to her attention and she would arrange to follow up with Primary Care and Caredoc.

6. Questions

(a) Cllr. Peter Horgan put forward the following question:

"To ask for the details of all HSE capital projects in Cork city and County currently underway, in planning, design phase."

A written response from Mr Daniel Clifford, Assistant National Director was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Horgan asked whether there is a HSE Estates Masterfile Database for capital projects and if so whether he could have access to it. It was agreed to request HSE Estates to present at an upcoming South West Committee meeting.

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

"Can we please have an update on progress being made on securing a location and agreements for an additional ambulance base in Killorglin to help cover the Mid and South Kerry area more effectively?"

A written response from Mr Rob Moriarty, National Ambulance Service was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Moriarty thanked NAS for the reply and asked further in relation to proposal and a Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV). Mr Rob Moriarty outlined that a RRV vehicle has been secured by NAS. He stated that whilst there have been discussions with the Defence Forces – there need to be Estates involvement to progress this proposed arrangement.

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

"Following the recent launch and publication of the pharmacy task force report where the role of the community pharmacy is proposed to be greatly enhanced in the provision of primary care. What supports are the HSE giving to assist in the delivery of the task force recommendations."

A written response from Mr Pat Healy, National Director for National Services and Schemes was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Sheehy acknowledged this written response. However he highlighted the need to alleviate pressures on GP Services. Cllr Sheehy referenced the role of community pharmacists providing the Minor Ailment Scheme instead of General Practitioners. The role of community pharmacy has been expanding and increasing in recent years. Community Pharmacists have a high level of expertise and training which was demonstrated throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Cllr Sheehy would like to see specific recommendations and actions from this Taskforce vis a vis the Community Pharmacist role and Schemes and would welcome further information when available.

(d) Cllr. Danny Collins put forward the following question:

"Are the HSE getting updates from the receiver who recently took over Aperee Nursing Home in Bantry? It's vital that this stays as a nursing home for years to come and as if it doesn't it will cause extra strains on Bantry General Hospital."

A written response from Ms Tess O'Donovan, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Collins noted reply, however he stated that this nursing home needs to remain open for the sake of the 28 residents and to alleviate pressures on Bantry General Hospital. The population is aging and there is a shortage of nursing-home beds in the country. Tess O' Donovan Chief Officer outlined that this is a private nursing home and that the HSE has no governance or remit over any private nursing homes registered with HIQA. The Receiver is in direct contact with the Regulatory Body HIQA.

Ms O'Donovan stated that there are a number of private nursing homes in similar circumstances across the country and that these are very serious matters. She acknowledged that that this is a most difficult process for everyone and most especially for residents and their families. The HSE is working to open as much public bed capacity as possible. Ms O'Donovan agreed to take Cllr Collins's concerns and information to the appropriate Management.

7. Date and Time of next meeting – 27th of February 2025. Venue: Council Chambers, Cork County Council, County Hall, Cork.