

**MINUTES  
MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH**

**Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 11am**

**Venue: Council Chambers, Cork County Council, County Hall, Cork**

**Present:**

Cllr Ann Marie Ahern\*     **Chairperson**

Cllr Ann Bambury

Cllr Declan Barry

Cllr Tomas Breathnach

Cllr Fergal Browne

Cllr Danny Collins

Cllr John Coonan\*

Cllr Pat Dunphy

Cllr Deirdre Ferris\*

Cllr Dominic Finn

Cllr John Fleming

Cllr Ger Frisby

Cllr Damian Geoghegan

Cllr Finbarr Harrington **Vice Chairperson**

Cllr Jackie Healy-Rae

Cllr Peter Horgan\*

Cllr Roger Kennedy

Cllr Mary Lenihan Foley\*

Cllr Margaret McDonnell

Cllr Marie Moloney

Cllr Norma Moriarty

Cllr Marie Murphy\*

Cllr John O'Leary

Cllr Tony O'Shea\*

Cllr Daniel Pender\*

Cllr Michael Smith

Cllr Joe Sullivan

Cllr Adrienne Wallace\*

Cllr Adam Wyse

**\* attended online**

**Apologies:**

**In Attendance:**

- Ms Sonya Cotter, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager, Cork North and East, HSE South West
- Ms Sinead Reynolds, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager, Waterford/Wexford, HSE Dublin and South East\*
- Mr Jonathan Hoare, Director of Communication and Parliamentary Affairs, HSE South West
- Ms Emma Finn, Director of Communication and Parliamentary Affairs, HSE Dublin and South East\*
- Members of the Regional Health Forum South Office staff

**\* attended online**

Cllr Ahern, Chairperson attended online and Cllr Finbarr Harrington who attended in person Chaired the meeting. Cllr Harrington opened the meeting and welcomed members and HSE Management. He advised that this is to be the last meeting of the Regional Health Forum South in its current structure and that the next meeting would be in the new structure as part of the Health Regions and that this will involve a split of the current Forum. He thanked all members and HSE officers for their support and hard work stating that it had been a very valuable Forum as it stood.

The Chairperson proposed a Vote of Sympathy for Cllr Declan Barry on the sad passing of his sister Josephine Barry Carroll on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam.

## **1. Adoption of the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025**

On the proposal of Cllr Dominic Finn seconded by Cllr Roger Kennedy the minutes of the Forum meeting held on Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025 were approved and adopted by the members.

## **2. Chairperson's Correspondence**

### **2.1 Election of Chairperson**

### **2.2 Election of Vice Chairperson**

It was agreed by the Chairperson and the members that the election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson would be postponed until the next meeting and first meeting of the Regional Health Forums within the new reconfiguration.

## **3. Committees**

The next Committee meetings will be held on:

- (a) South East Committee Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2025 in Kilkenny
- (b) South West Committee Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2025 in Tralee

## **4. Notices of Motion**

Cllr Ferris's Motion and question were taken first on her request.

(i) Cllr Deirdre Ferris moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"Can the members be supplied with the details of planned upgrades and repairs in the Cashel Ward servicing paediatrics in UHK?"

A written response from Ms Julie O'Neill, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager Kerry, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Ferris acknowledged the response and relayed her concerns over the condition of the Cashel Ward and looked for a definitive timeline for the repairs. Ms Sony Cotter, IHA Manager Cork North and East stated that she would confirm the dates of the two stages involved in the project.

**Question (f)** Cllr Deirdre Ferris put forward the following question:

"Can I get a list of all vacant HSE owned properties in Kerry please?"

A written response from Mr Daniel Clifford, Director of Estates, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Ferris thanked HSE Management for the response she thought the list was a substantial list and was very interested in their locations and especially those in prime locations.

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

“What options, if any, are available to Day Care Centres in South Tipperary and throughout the South East region to apply for funding for a replacement bus to enable the smooth operation of transporting users safely to and from day care centres?”

A written response from Ms Roseanne Killeen, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager, Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary, HSE Dublin and South East was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Murphy thanked the HSE for the response she explained that currently there is a fundraiser for a vehicle ongoing. She hoped that there would be more HSE funding available in the near future.

(b) Cllr Adrienne Wallace moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

“That the HSE reconsider the €220 fee for the Chicken Pox Vaccine for children born before October 1st 2024 with special consideration given to a free vaccine for children with disabilities and/or underlying health conditions whose families already face additional costs.”

A written response from Ms Roseanne Killeen, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager, Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary, HSE Dublin and South East was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Wallace thanked HSE Management for the response. She said that families with children with serious underlying health conditions can be under pressure paying considerable fee for the vaccines. Ms Sinead Reynolds said that she would bring this particular concern back to the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) and that she would revert to Cllr Wallace and RHF Members on receipt of their response.

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

“Do the HSE have any plans for a one stop addiction therapy hub, in Waterford City and County? Indeed, what addiction services are there currently available, in Waterford? Namely, for people suffering from either drugs, alcohol or gambling addictions, or indeed, a combination of any or all of these.”

A written response from Ms Sinead Reynolds, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager, Waterford/Wexford, HSE Dublin and South East was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Barry stated he was happy and thanked Ms Sinead Reynolds with the very comprehensive response. He stated that he would welcome any development to have a Tier 4 residential service located in Waterford.

(d) Cllr Fergal Browne moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

“To outline the capital funding allocations for health facilities in County Carlow as recently announced by the HSE.”

A written response from Ms Roseanne Killeen, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager, Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary, HSE Dublin and South East was circulated to members

and noted. Cllr Browne was anxious to confirm the plans for the Local Injury Unit and Kelvin Grove were progressing. He also took the opportunity to thank the HSE for their support and response to a recent serious incident that occurred in Carlow with the provision of counselling services. Ms Reynolds was glad that the HSE were able to provide assistance to the people of Carlow effected by this incident and will continue to do so as necessary. Cllr Wallace was grateful for the rapid response and stated that whilst the initial shock may be wearing off there would be in need for supports to be available into the coming weeks. Ms Reynolds stated that she will continue to monitor this and had staff that were skilled with dealing with these serious incidents.

(e) Cllr Ann Bambury moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

“Can I request the following information be provided: the number of children living in Cork County currently awaiting a referral to a children’s disability network team? Also, please provide an up-to-date breakdown of the number of children currently awaiting various therapies, e.g., speech & language, phycologist, play therapy, and the average length of time they await these vital therapies through the CDNT services.”

A written response from Ms Julie O’Neill, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager Kerry, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Bambury requested that recruitment around CDNT teams needed to be treated with more urgency as children can regress with lack of therapies due to lack of staff. Ms Sonya Cotter explained that ongoing recruitment campaigns are ongoing in the HSE Southwest and recruitment is priority.

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

“I am calling on the H.S.E. to increase services for children with special needs such as speech and language, physiotherapy, psychology, psychiatrists and Occupational Therapists.”

A written response from Ms Julie O’Neill, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager Kerry, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Collins made the point from himself and his constituents that early intervention is better for a child’s progress and costs are far less at this stage rather than future crises. He highlighted that there was no special school in West Cork which is a large geographic area within Cork. Cllr Marie Moloney agreed that early intervention is required. Cllr Dominic Finn supported this and asked about the CAMHS hub in Mahon. Ms Cotter explained that currently there are six special schools in Cork have been included in a national pilot programme to provide occupational therapy, speech & language therapy and behaviour supports on-site in special schools. Ms Cotter said she would get back with an update on the CAMHS Hub query on Mahon.

(g) Cllr John Fleming moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

“I am calling on the Hse to reduce the long waiting times and lists for Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) sufferers”

A written response from Ms Sinead Reynolds, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager, Waterford/Wexford, HSE Dublin and South East was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Fleming spoke at Spinal Cord Stimulation and the waiting lists involved with this. He also stated that the NTPF scheme was used in the past to access this service but he understood

this this to be is no longer available. Ms Reynolds said she seek clarification on Spinal Cord Stimulation and waiting lists and treatment abroad NTPF scheme and come back to him.

(h) Cllr Daniel Pender moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

“That the HSE investigate the Western Australian Autism Association's approach to wrap around autism supports for Children and how they could be integrated into the Irish system.”

A written response from Mr John Firtzmaurice, Chairperson of Service Improvement Programme Board Health Services Executive, I was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Pender thanked the HSE Management for the comprehensive response. He was pleased that this had been researched thoroughly by the HSE. He acknowledged that limitations exist in the best systems in the world and that they too have long waiting lists. Cllr Pender had a query on the interaction on CDNTs, families and schools. It was agreed to seek clarification on this.

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

“That the GAA field at Derrynane GAA in Caherdaniel be added as a landing spot for air ambulance and coast guard air-activity.”

A written response from Mr Rob Moriarty, General Manager, Cork and Kerry, National Ambulance Service was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Moriarty thanked and appreciated the positive response. She was confident that the criteria and standards would be met as required.

(k) Cllr Marie Moloney moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

“That following the transfer of patients from Killarney Community Hospital to the new facility that the HSE would invest serious funding in refurbishing the Community Hospital to provide much needed respite services for the people of Kerry. Many people who are caring for their loved ones with a disability at home cannot access respite services due to severe shortage of such facilities in Kerry.”

A written response from Ms Julie O'Neill, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager Kerry, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Moriarty explained that families are under severe pressure while caring for their family members and do not get a break due to the lack of short term respite services. She enquired about the location of the Minor Injury Unit in Killarney.

Ms Cotter agreed with the need for respite services and acknowledged that more beds will be required to meet increased demands for centre based respite care. Respite can be provided in a variety of settings. Cllr Norma Moriarty supported the motion that more respite facilities to support families in Kerry. Cllr McDonnell agreed with this within the Cork area families were finding it difficult to plan or get away for a break due to the lack of these respite beds. Cllr Bambury supported this and encouraged more engagement with healthcare providers in the community. Cllr Moloney also queried as to whether there was a National Database of Carers. Ms Cotter stated that she was unaware of a National database but locally Public Health Nurses had lists of carers in their areas. Cllr Jackie Healy Rae supported the motion and encouraged the utilisation of any beds that become available into the near future would be used for respite beds.

(l) Cllr Margaret McDonnell moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

“Could I have an update on the Primary Care Centre in Glanmire?”

A written response from Ms Sonya Cotter, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager Cork North and East, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted. Cllr McDonnell stated that planning permission was not approved. Currently there are three GP surgeries in the area and the local constituents are still looking for GP spaces with the growing population in the area and there are none available. The local area also required therapies like podiatry etc. that only a Primary Care Centre can provide. Ms Cotter stated that she is aware that both Glanmire and Mayfield are in need of Primary Care Centres and said that HSE Management are having ongoing meetings with the Council to progress these.

## **5. Questions**

(a) Cllr Adrienne Wallace put forward the following question:

“Noting that there were 86 less public health nurses in 2024 than there were at the end of 2020 – a six per cent decrease - and that the 2018 Health Service Capacity Review found there would be a 46 per cent increase in demand for public health nurse appointments by 2031. Can the HSE reveal whether there is adequate Public Health Nurses serving the Carlow/Kilkenny area and, if necessary, what measures are being implemented to ensure full recruitment?”

A written response from Ms Roseanne Killeen, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager, Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary, HSE Dublin and South East was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Wallace advised she had heard anecdotally about shortages of Public Health Nursing and Community Registered Nurses that are impacting on services. Ms Reynolds advised that where vacancies arise there are ongoing efforts to recruit.

(b) Cllr Ann Bambury put forward the following question:

“How many children in Cork County are awaiting a CAMHS referral? What is the average wait time? How many children are currently availing of support from CAMHS in Cork County?”

A written response from Ms Julie O'Neill, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager Kerry, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Bambury felt that more tele medicine was required and one record for each child sharing information across Departments. She thought incentivised initiatives for students who are graduates to work with CAMHS may help address recruitment problems, maybe a student loan or apprenticeships as some solutions to the Waiting Lists. Ms Cotter stated that meetings with CAMHS teams were ongoing on the provision of supports and how the HSE can address waiting lists.

(c) Cllr Roger Kennedy put forward the following question:

“Have the HSE any plans to establish a specialised clinic in the South East to deal with patients suffering from Cataracts”

A written response from Ms Sinead Reynolds, Integrated Health Manager, Waterford/Wexford, and from Ms Roseanne Killeen, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager,

Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary, HSE Dublin and South East was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Kennedy stated that a 12 month wait for surgery is not good enough and enquired how many were on the waiting list. Ms Reynolds stated that there was funding was provided for the development of Eye Care Teams for parts of the country, however to date the South East has not been included. It is acknowledged that there should be similar services across the country, and we are committed to improving and providing a better service. Ms Reynolds said she would follow up on numbers waiting for the Councillor.

(d) Cllr John Fleming put forward the following question:

“Why is autism not classed as a medical condition in order for a GP to get involved.”

A written response from Ms Sinead Reynolds, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager, Waterford/Wexford, HSE Dublin and South East was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Fleming noted that Autism is generally understood as a neurodevelopmental difference, rather than a medical disorder. He said there are families spending large amounts of money seeking private assessments / services and long waiting lists in public healthcare. If this could be avoided by going through GP services, it would help. Ms Reynolds specified that GPs have an important role and input as part of the healthcare team and Autism.

Ms Reynolds acknowledged the difficulties for families dealing with access issues.

(e) Cllr Daniel Pender put forward the following question:

“What supports is the HSE providing to those being diagnosed as neurodivergent later in life?”

A written response from Ms Roseanne Killeen, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager, Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary, HSE Dublin and South East was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Pender noted that there were not a lot of supports for people diagnosed with ADHD later in life. Ms Reynolds informed members that that in 2025 HSE Dublin and South East Region our Mental Health Services received national funding approval to develop an Adult ADHD Team to serve Integrated Healthcare Area Waterford Wexford and IHA Carlow Kilkenny and South Tipperary areas.

(g) Cllr Norma Moriarty put forward the following question:

“Can we get an update on progress in securing an ambulance base in Killorglin to help serve the Iveragh peninsula and alleviate the pressure on the Cahersiveen base?”

A written response from Mr Rob Moriarty, General Manager, Cork and Kerry, National Ambulance Service was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Moriarty welcomed the response and acknowledged that a lot of work has taken place to get the project to this stage. She asked about the timeline as referenced in the written reply. Mr Moriarty said that there has been a multifaceted approach taken by the NAS and that it is hoped to secure the base and additional staff (subject to funding) within an overall delivery of services in the Kerry area. Mr Moriarty acknowledged the positive input of the IHA Manager on this.

(h) Cllr Julie O'Neill put forward the following question:

"Can the HSE confirm that they are 100% committed to building a Primary Care Centre on the grounds of the Aras Pádraig. There is much speculation as whether or not the HSE will build on this site."

A written response from Ms Julie O'Neill, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager Kerry, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Moloney acknowledged the response and that it stated that the provision of a Primary Care facility on the grounds of Áras Phádraig site is a joint venture planning application with Kerry County Council.

(i) Cllr Margaret McDonnell put forward the following question:

"Could I have an update on the Primary Care Centre in Mayfield?"

A written response from Ms Sonya Cotter, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager Cork North and East, HSE South West was circulated to members and noted. Cllr McDonnell acknowledged the response and thanked the HSE Management for it.

6. Date and Time of next meeting - 18<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at 11am. Venue: Council Chambers, Cork County Council, County Hall, Cork