

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM

Chairperson,
Cllr. Jason Murphy

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MINUTES - MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH

Thursday 22nd November 2018 at 2pm
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, CORK

Present:

Cllr. John Carey
Cllr. Timmy Collins
Cllr. Henry Cremin
Cllr. John Joe Culloty
Cllr. Davy Daniels
Cllr. Michael Doyle
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald
Cllr. John Francis Flynn
Cllr. Breda Gardner
Cllr. Willie Kavanagh
Cllr. Mary Linehan Foley

Cllr. Michael McCarthy
Cllr. Susan McCarthy
Cllr. Arthur McDonald
Cllr. Bernard Moynihan
Cllr. Jason Murphy
Cllr. Bobby O'Connell
Cllr. Damian Quigg
Cllr. John Sheehan
Cllr. Mary Shields
Cllr. Joe Sullivan
Cllr. Tom Wood

Apologies:

Cllr. Denis Foley
Cllr. Deirdre Forde
Cllr. Imelda Goldsboro
Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan
Cllr. Louise McLoughlin

In Attendance:

Dr Ger O' Callaghan, Chief Operations Officer, South/South West Hospitals Group
Ms Pricilla Lynch, Head of Health And Wellbeing, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare
Ms Anna Marie Lanigan Head of Primary Care, South East Community Healthcare
Members of the HSE South Forum Office staff

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Thursday 20th September 2018

On the proposal of Cllr. Joe Sullivan, seconded by Cllr. Willie Kavanagh, the Minutes of the Forum meeting held on Thursday, September 20th 2018 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 4th December 2018 in Kilkenny

(a) South West Committee Meeting 6th December in Cork

Details were noted by the members.

4. Presentation HSE Live Ms Geraldine Charman

Ms Geraldine Charman gave a presentation on HSELive system which provides information and signposting on health & health services for the public. HSELive is a multi-channel public information service, which still includes a phone line, but also a live chat facility on the website, email and Twitter. HSELive can answer questions about health services, entitlements and how to access public health and social care services. HSELive does not offer clinical or medical advice.

Cllr. Daniels asked whether HSELive would be able to respond to medical card queries. Ms. Charman stated that specific medical card queries are signposted to the Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS). Cllr. Gardner asked if patient health records/information could be centrally held on HSELive. Ms. Charman clarified that this is not the role of HSELive. Cllr. John Sheehan welcomed this initiative; however he still has concerns in general for people with literacy/language problems accessing services. Cllr. John Buttimer asked whether the queries and concerns navigating the health system received by HSELive are logged as complaints. Ms. Charman advised that HSELive is not a complaints service; however they do give feedback to services. Cllr. Cremin commented that many members of the public want a lo-call telephone number and want to speak to a person directly. Cllr. Fitzpatrick asked whether information on cross-border initiatives could be provided via HSELive. In conclusion Cllr. Quigg asked about the costs of running HSELive - Ms. Charman will forward same.

5. Notices of Motion

(a) Cllr. John Joe Culloty moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"I call on the HSE, to urgently secure replacement of Histopathologist to University Hospital Kerry. Also, to confirm progress regarding recruitment of Consultant Cardiologist, Respiratory Physician, and full time Geriatric Consultant."

A written response from Dr. Ger O' Callaghan was circulated to members and noted. Cllr. Culloty noted that Consultant recruitment was a national issue. Cllr. Culloty asked whether the Histopathologist would be for both University Hospital Kerry and Cork University Hospital and also asked in relation to the advertisement of Cardiologist and Geriatrician posts. Cllr. Culloty asked also about the Respiratory Physician. Cllrs. Brendan Cronin and John Francis Flynn supported Cllr. Culloty's motion in terms of the need for recruitment of Consultants and the continuity of service provision in Kerry.

Dr. Ger O' Callaghan advised that there are significant challenges in terms of Consultant recruitment. There are ongoing efforts to recruit to permanent Consultant positions - 5 Paediatric Consultant posts have been recruited in Kerry and there is a process ongoing to permanently fill 3 Emergency Department Consultants. Following the resignation of the Histopathologist in Kerry University Hospital in December 2018 there is a need to implement an interim arrangement to ensure continuity of services from January 2019. There are particular difficulties with the recruitment of a single Histopathologist in Kerry and therefore to make the post more appealing to applicants efforts are ongoing to recruit across both Cork and Kerry services.

With regard to Cardiology posts, Dr. O' Callaghan advised that any new Consultant posts have to go through the national Consultant Approval Process. The Cork and Kerry Hospitals Cardiology services are linked with a locum in place. The Consultant Geriatrician post was advertised, unfortunately there were no applicants. In addition approval is currently being sought for a Respiratory Physician in Kerry. Cllr Culloty accepted the response from Dr. O'Callaghan. There are also specific challenges recruiting Rheumatology Consultants.

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

Why is a Personal Care Assistant/Home Help within the HSE not paid for their time whilst travelling from one position to another."

A written response from Mr TJ Dunford Chief Officer, South East Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr. McDonald accepted this reply.

(c) Cllr. Tom Wood moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"With the Gate Lodge at Our Lady's Hospital Complex, Cashel, a sad reflection of unnecessary neglect and the Lodge at Saint Patrick's Hospital, Cashel (a former comfortable family residence for decades) standing idle for the past few years, this Forum calls on the relevant section of the HSE to actively pursue a plan to utilize both structures."

A written response from Mr TJ Dunford was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Wood stated that the Order of Malta was interested in the Gate Lodge. The Gate Lodge is located in a prominent position. Cllr. Wood then asked about the Lodge at St Patrick's in relation to the new replacement capital build and whether a design team had been appointed to the project. Ms. Anna Marie Lanigan stated that she would refer this request to HSE Estates and revert to Cllr. Wood.

(d) Cllr. Joe Sullivan moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"To ask the HSE to explain why the €428,635.83 which is owed to St Aidan's Day Care Services, Millands, Gorey, Co Wexford, some of it dating back to 2016 has not been paid and to exhort the HSE to pay this money with immediate effect so as this facility which is giving excellent care and providing an essential service to the community of North Wexford and surrounding areas can continue to serve the people in the excellent manner it has to date."

Cllr. Sullivan noted the response and stated that it was important that matters were progressing in this regard.

(e) Cllr. Danielle Twomey moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

"That the HSE invest heavily in Early Intervention Services in Cork County with a view to putting in place a plan, to aggressively cut the huge waiting lists for access to these services."

A written response from Mr Ger Reaney was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Twomey referenced the current psychology posts unfilled; Ms Priscilla Lynch Head of Health & Wellbeing advised that there were on-going difficulties with respect to recruiting Psychologists. Cork Kerry Community Healthcare continue to maximise on all efforts to fill these vacancies. A number of vacancies have arisen due to maternity leave, such vacancies are actively being managed with a view to replacement. Ms Lynch stated that in line with national policy the service focus is on Early Intervention Services and waiting list reduction. Cllr Mary Lenihan Foley outlined her support for Cllr Twomey in this motion asked whether people with ASD can be seen in other areas. Ms. Lynch responded stating that a specific piece of work has commenced in an effort to address the current wait lists for ASD services in the region. The HSE and the service providers are working collaboratively to look at standardising the ASD assessment process. Currently there are variations taken in the time to assess each child. It is envisaged that standardising the process will increase the numbers seen.

(f) Cllr. Breda Gardner moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

"That Minister Simon Harris, Dept. of Health and HSE will fund in its Capital Budget for the MRI scanner that was allocated and approved to The Friends of St Luke's Hospital. Where is the project at? And can the MRI be up and running in first half of 2019? "

A written response from Ms. Anne Slattery, General Manager, St Luke's General Hospital was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr. Gardner raised the issue as the Friends of St. Luke's Hospital had raised €250k for and was disappointed to read in the response of a delay in capital funding.

6. Questions

(a) Cllr. Cllr John Joe Culloty put forward the following question:

"What is the current situation, regarding the proposed facility, which will replace the two existing hospitals in Killarney?"

A written response from Mr Ger Reaney, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Culloty requested that dementia units should be included in any new community hospital build given the increasing numbers of people with the condition.

(b) Cllr Tom Wood put forward the following question:

"For how long more does the HSE expect Saint Patrick's Hospital in Cashel to operate with present staffing levels before HIQA will call into question the safety of patients and all involved?"

A written response from Mr TJ Dunford was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Wood highlighted that the HIQA report for St. Patrick's only considered one unit in relation to staffing levels and commented on low staff morale across the hospital. In response Ms Anna Marie Lanigan noted his comments and stated that there were difficulties attracting staff to long stay hospitals.

(c) Cllr Danielle Twomey put forward the following questions:

Does the HSE have a date for the opening of the outreach clinic for juvenile arthritis patients in Cork, and progress to date on this?

A written response from Mr Tony McNamara, Chief Executive Officer, Cork University Hospital Group was circulated to members and noted. In addition Dr. Ger O'Callaghan confirmed that funding approval was required for this service and that it has been included as part of the estimates process.

7. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 28st February 2019, at 2pm in Council Chambers, County Hall, Cork.

The Chairman asked members to note the foregoing arrangements.