

MINUTES **MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH**

Thursday 19th September 2019 at 2pm
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, CORK

Present:

Cllr Pat Barden
Cllr Audrey Buckley
Cllr Declan Burgess
Cllr Peter Cleere
Cllr Danny Collins
Cllr Davy Daniels
Cllr Pat Dunphy
Cllr Mark Fitzgerald
Cllr Michael Gleeson
Cllr Pat Hayes
Cllr Joe Kavanagh
Cllr Niall Kelleher
Cllr Mike Kennelly
Cllr Donal Kenny

Cllr Mary Lenihan Foley
Cllr Eileen Lynch
Cllr Michael McCarthy
Cllr Susan McCarthy
Cllr Conor McGuinness
Cllr Norma Moriarty
Cllr Gearóid Murphy
Cllr Sean O'Donovan
Cllr Jody Power
Cllr John Sheehan
Cllr Mikey Sheehy
Cllr James Tobin
Cllr Ted Tynan

Apologies:

Cllr John Coonan
Cllr Willie Kavanagh
Cllr Roger Kennedy
Cllr Arthur McDonald
Cllr John McDonald

Cllr Richie Molloy
Cllr Katie Murphy
Cllr Ken O'Flynn

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 Chief Officer, South East Community Health Organisation
Members of the HSE South Forum Office staff

Cllr Mary Lenihan Foley through the Acting Chairperson Cllr Gearóid Murphy requested a to discuss a "Matter of Urgent Importance" in relation to Castlemartyr Health Centre as it had arisen since the Regional Health Forum deadline for receipt of Notice Of Motion/Questions. Cllr. Lenihan Foley had been made aware initially via the media that Castlemartyr Health Centre was closing for the foreseeable future and was very concerned about the impact of this for local people. Cllr Lenihan Foley had subsequently received a written response from Majella Daly HSE Primary Care which clarified the matter. Cllr Susan McCarthy supported Cllr Lenihan Foley on this matter and asked whether there were plans for an upgraded facility at this centre. Mr. Ger Reaney apologised for any failure in communications and stated it was not Cork Kerry Community Healthcare policy to communicate with public representatives through the media. Mr. Reaney also confirmed that health staff continue to be based in Castlemartyr - there is no reduction in service at present. However in over the past number of years, services have been transferred to other locations including Midleton Community Hospital. He also advised that the cost of refurbishment is in excess of €300k and at this time this funding is not available in the context of other service priorities. Mr. Reaney also advised that while it is not possible to confirm services will recommence or indeed continue in the health centre, however he would seek to provide an update to Cllr. Lenihan Foley. Cllr Lenihan Foley and Cllr S McCarthy thanked Mr. Reaney for his reply.

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Thursday 27th June 2019

On the proposal of Cllr John Sheehan seconded by Cllr Michael Gleeson, the Minutes of the Forum meeting held on Thursday, 27th June, 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 15.10.2019 in Kilkenny
- (a) South West Committee Meeting held on 17.10.2019 in Tralee

4. Notices of Motion

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

"I call on the HSE South to prioritise a Primary Care Centre for the Youghal area bearing in mind that the nearest Hospital is an hour away and after 6pm there is no doctor available in Youghal town with a population of approximately 12,000."

A written response from Mr Ger Reaney, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Lenihan Foley thanked Mr Reaney for his reply stating that she was pleased to note that Youghal has been included as an area for Primary Care based on the national needs assessment. She noted that Youghal is still 45 minutes from the nearest Accident and Emergency Department. Cllr Conor McGuinness was supportive of Cllr Lenihan Foley also highlighted similar issues for people living in his area of West Waterford. Cllr John Sheehan supported this motion and also noted the different roles and functions of Accident and Emergency Departments and Primary Care

Centres. Primary Care Centres are no substitute for Accident and Emergency Departments. He raised the matter of GP recruitment and retention as a national issue and particularly for Out of Hours GP Services which for Youghal are provided at night through Middleton.

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

"That we progress as a matter of urgency the establishment of a Primary Care Centre in Caherciveen, Co Kerry. This is urgently needed given the fact it would serve the population of the Iveragh Peninsula a population once served by twice the number of GP's currently working in the area."

Cllr Norma Moriarty

A written response from Mr Ger Reaney was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Norma Moriarty thanked Mr. Ger Reaney for his detailed reply and also raised the lack of female GPs in the area with people having to travel considerable distances to see one. Cllr Niall Kelleher supported Cllr Moriarty's statement and the difficulties getting GPs in rural areas. Mr. Ger Reaney outlined some planned Primary Care Centre developments in the Kerry area.

(c) Cllr Audrey Buckley moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

"The average secondary school bag weights 6.5kg, as the new school year has just started, again we are left addressing the weight of our children's school bags. We have been told by the department of education it is up to the parents to engage with the school around these issues. Across the country we again are listening on social media and the radio to the amount of books these children are carrying on their backs each day. We all want our children to have a healthy lifestyle balance, but because of the weight of their school bags a large percent of children need to be dropped and picked up at the school because they physically cannot carry their school bag. children complaining of shoulder and back pain is unnecessary and needs to be addressed."

A discussion took place in the chambers with many members supporting Cllr Buckley. It was decided that the Regional Health Forum would write to the Minister of Education on this issue.

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

"To ask the Minister for Health to support the expansion of Chemotherapy and Cancer Services on the grounds of University Hospital Kerry given the huge increase in patient numbers since the unit opened in 2001."

A written response from Mr Fearghal Grimes, General Manager, University Hospital Kerry was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Michael Sheehy thanked Hospital Management for the reply although with increasing demands for these services there needs to be developments to facilitate greater numbers of patients. Cllr Michael Gleeson was strongly supportive of the Motion having visited the Palliative care Unit in Tralee and advocated for a new cancer unit. Dr Ger O' Callaghan advised that S/SW Hospital Group were working closely with Fearghal Grimes on this and are seeking to get a proposal developed and included as part of the capital programme.

(e) Cllr Declan Burgess moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

“That the HSE gives urgent consideration to the provision of step down beds at Our Lady’s Hospital, Cashel, as a means of relieving the accommodation pressure on South Tipperary General Hospital over the coming winter months.”

A written response from Ms Kate Killeen White, Chief Officer, South East Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Burgess stated that he had put forward this motion as he felt members of the public were disillusioned with the HSE over the current use of Our Lady’s in Cashel. Ms Killeen White acknowledged Cllr Burgess’s reply, and advised that there are a number of teams based at Our Lady’s providing services on site and also to the population in the surrounding area supporting people in their own homes. Cllr Mark Fitzgerald agreed with Cllr Burgess and also acknowledged the good facilities and services at Our Lady’s as stated that members of the public are not always aware of such services. With the Winter months approaching he hoped there would be plans in place. Ms Killeen White advised that the community and hospitals were working again this year on Winter Planning and that they could present further information on this at another Forum meeting.

(f) Cllr Jody Power moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

“In a practical effort to reduce the waste of time and effort required of all parties in accessing personal medical records, the current practice, as outlined above, to be changed whereby the patient can access their private medical records by presenting himself in person, with proof of identification. Furthermore, the €20 fee charged for accessing personal information is excessive given that all health related HSE activities are already paid for in universal personal taxation.”

A written response from Mary Deasy Regional Manager Consumer Affairs was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Power outlined difficulties experienced by a patient trying to access their medical records. Cllr Pat Fitzgerald in support highlighted challenges accessing medical records and costs with same. Ger O’Callaghan advised that if there were any particular issues relating to an individual case they could write to the Freedom of Information Unit.

5. Questions

(a) Cllr Mary Lenihan Foley put forward the following question:

“Can the HSE South please provide an update on OT services in Youghal and East Cork Area”

A written response from Mr Ger Reaney was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr Lenihan Foley was satisfied with the reply in that the HSE were trying to source Occupational Therapists and use of St Raphael’s Building in Youghal. Ger Reaney indicated that this was a temporary approach whilst the HSE was seeking the development (subject to funding) of a new Primary Care Centre.

Cllr Pat Fitzgerald asked about the Old Dispensary Clinic and whether there were any Primary Care Centres marked for Cheekpoint / Passage East Co. Waterford in the future. Ms Killeen White advised that this could be discussed at the upcoming South East Committee meeting with the Head of Service for Primary Care.

(b) Cllr Gearóid Murphy put forward the following question:

"To ask the Minister for Health what is the current total capacity of Day Care Centres for dementia in the North Cork area, and whether there are any plans to increase capacity."

A written response from Mr Ger Reaney was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Murphy was thankful for this reply but requested further detail on the provision of Day Care Centres in Cork/Kerry both specifically for people living with dementia and also for older people in general. The concept of dementia friendly community was also discussed along with a request regarding any plans for increased Dementia specific Day Care capacity and funding. Mr Reaney noted that he was pleased that public representatives were supportive of the importance of Day Care Centres.

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

"Can we please have a detailed explanation of the process with timelines involved in deciding on vacancies and the recruiting and hiring of staff for all health care positions. Essentially what I am seeking to ascertain is how are vacancies identified, who signs off on same, how advertising and recruiting is done and precisely what the process involved in having a person begin actually working in said position is."

A written response from Dr Ger O'Callaghan, Mr Ger Reaney and Ms Kate Killeen White was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr Moriarty thanked the HSE Management for their detailed response to her question. Her query had been prompted by staffing retirement in Cahirciveen Community Hospital and specifically the HSE response to planned/known retirements. She acknowledged the HSE reply in relation to panels. Cllr Moriarty also highlighted the difficulties of an Occupational Therapist working in the UK and wanted to relocate to rural Kerry and the length of time it took for the Professional Registration to be completed. Cllr Moriarty stated that there appears to be significant roadblocks in the system in terms of recruitment of staff and filling vacant posts. Mr Ger Reaney in response noted that these were two different situations presented by Cllr Moriarty. Mr Reaney is familiar with Cahirciveen issue which was exacerbated by the current recruitment controls which were implemented. He also stated that recruitment to rural areas is challenging and local services area always planning to replace forthcoming vacancies. There is a scarcity of nurses and many do not need to wait on recruitment panels. With regard to the Occupational Therapist case, Mr. Reaney stated that he would need further information on this before he could reply. Mr Reaney also explained to the members that the HSE Recruitment unit was centralised in Manorhamilton.

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

"What is the time frame for the processing and approval of fair deal applications in Kerry and Cork, and in the situation whereby delays occur what processes are in place to get patients from acute beds into community hospitals in order to maximum our already stressed hospital bed situation."

A written response from Mr Ger Reaney was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Sheehy was concerned regarding delays in processing of Nursing Home Subvention (Fair Deal) applications. Mr Reaney advised that this process involves both a care needs assessment and a financial assessment. There are frequently delays in the availability and submission of the requested financial information from applicants/their families. The

current timeframe to complete assessments is approximately 28 days and which is positive. Once completed and approved applicants are then placed on the national waiting list for funding. This is managed centrally and in strict chronological order. With regard to getting people who are medically fit out of acute hospitals, Mr Reaney advised that there are a number of short stay beds in Community/District Hospitals providing that someone is medically stable and clinically fit. Mr Reaney also outlined Transitional Care Funding available to facilitate discharge from acute hospital. Community Services are actively working with Acute Services with the aim of addressing delayed discharges throughout the year and also particularly more so in winter months.

(e) Cllr Declan Burges put forward the following question:

"Is the HSE prepared to take any steps to improve the derelict appearance of the former gate lodge at Our Lady's Hospital Complex in Cashel?"

A written response from Ms Kate Killeen White was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Burgess thanked Ms Killeen White for her reply; however as part of the Tidy Towns I Cashel he was hopeful that something could be done re the appearance of the Gate Lodge. Ms Kileen White acknowledged Cllr Burgess – however she stated that given the demands for finite minor capital funding the priorities is on HSE clinical risk and patient safety.

(d) Cllr Eileen Lynch put forward the following question:

"In light of the recent HIQA reports as published on 3 September 2019 arising from unannounced inspections of designated centres for older people, in relation to the failings highlighted in the report of Macroom Community Hospital (Centre ID: OSV-0000578) and in particular, the quality and safety of care being provided, can the HSE outline the action plan and timeline involved in bringing the hospital to compliance with standards provided by the current Health Acts and addressing the failings identified in the HIQA report."

A written response from Mr Ger Reaney was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr Lynch thanked management for the reply and asked whether a planning permission application had been submitted. She also asked about the HSE Action Plan for compliance and the target dates set. Cllr Lynch also inquired about dates of future HIQA (Independent Regulatory Body) inspections.

Mr Ger Reaney advised that the plan for the development of the Hospital included additional accommodation which would be single rooms and Energy assessments which led to higher cost than originally anticipated. Ger Reaney in response to Cllr Lynch stated that that corrective action plans were developed in line with approaches successfully used in other units/hospitals. He had no further information on future HIQA inspections. Mr Reaney concluded that he anticipated there would be improvements shown following the next inspection at Macroom.

7. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 21st November 2019, at 2pm in Council Chambers, County Hall, Cork.