



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

HSE Audit & Risk Committee Meeting

Minutes

A meeting of the HSE Audit & Risk Committee was held on Monday 19th July 2021 at 08:00 am via videoconference.

Members Present: Brendan Lenihan (Vice Chair), Fergus Finlay, Fiona Ross, Ann Markey Pat Kirwan, Colm Campbell, Martin Pitt.

Board Members Joined: Deirdre Madden (item 2)

Apologies: Ann Markey

HSE Executive Attendance: Patrick Lynch (ND Governance and Risk), Stephen Mulvany (CFO), Mairead Dolan (ACFO), Anne OConnor (COO) (item 2), Niamh O Beirne (NL Testing and Tracing) (Item 2), Dean Sullivan (CSO) (item 3), Jim Curran (ND Estates) (item 3), Dara Purcell (Corporate Secretary), Hannah Barnes.

Minutes reflect the order in which items were considered and are numbered in accordance with the original agenda.

1. Governance and Administration

1.1 Welcome and Introductions

The Vice Chair welcomed Committee members to the meeting and held a private session to consider the agenda and papers for the meeting, and the approach to conducting the meeting. Ann Markey agreed to formally act as Committee Chair for the purposes of signing the minutes at this meeting and then asked the Vice Chair to handle the conduct of the meeting.

1.2 Declarations of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Covid-19 Delta Variant – Risk Management

2.1 Impact on Operations

The COO reviewed with the Committee the overview of Covid-19 Delta Variant situational analysis and available mitigations which was circulated in advance of the Committee meeting. The COO outlined

the impact the third surge Covid-19 has had on operations within the organisation. It was noted that the Delta variant is now the most prevalent variant of the COVID-19 virus, and the country is now experiencing exponential growth in the number of infections however this has not yet resulted in hospitalisations on the same level as experienced during the previous wave of the virus. The COO highlighted that the current environment in the health system is different to that of the third wave where acute hospital activity and occupancy levels are significantly higher with lower levels of capacity in the system to cope with a rapid onset Covid-19 / Delta variant transmissibility across the system. The key mitigations were outlined, and the Committee noted the importance of striking the optimal balance of executing available mitigations is critical with the potential applying delayed mitigations likely to result in an over burdened health system, further damage to the health and wellbeing of staff, and significantly higher quantum of adverse patient outcomes. The Committee discussed the current modelling of the virus in the community and the different triggers that are used to initiate mitigation plans within operations. The COO responded to questions regarding the numbers of vaccinated people being infected noting that this is a particular concern especially in regard to staff numbers, although the Committee were informed that there is less concern regarding nursing home populations due to the high levels of vaccinations and the lower link between the delta variant and serious illness and death.

Action:

- The COO will provide further updates to the Committee on the impact of the Delta variant on operations within the HSE.

2.2 Impact on Testing and Tracing

The NL Testing and tracing spoke to the paper on the Testing and Tracing strategy and operational plan for managing the projected increase in demand over the next 3 months as a result of the Delta variant which was circulated in advance of the Committee meeting. The NL for Testing and Tracing provided a high-level overview of demand and capacity projections including proposed actions to both increase capacity and control demand across each of the four pillars of the Testing and Tracing pathway. It was noted that the initial modelling exercise demonstrates that standing system capacity will be significantly exceeded in the coming weeks and months. Therefore, in producing the current iteration of modelling the HSE have reduced close contact PCR testing to 10% of total close contacts. Having done this, the community swabbing demand depending on the scenario ranges between 25,000 and 85,000 per day at the peak, and cases range from 2,500 to 17,500 per day at their peak.

The Committee were informed of the different procedures which are available to increase capacity and control demand within the Testing and Tracing Operating Model.

The Committee noted the challenges faced by the testing and Tracing division. Discussion regarding the risks to the function took place and the NL Testing and Tracing responded to questions from the Committee. She confirmed that there is a critical link between the testing and tracing function and communications. In particular, communications have circulated asking the public to answer calls from Testing and Tracing colleagues. Clarification was provided regarding increasing testing capacity to 50k, it was noted that this would require double the current lab space available for testing. Regarding triggers the Committee were informed that all triggers to move to next steps had been pre agreed which was a learning from the early surges in the pandemic. The Committee requested that consideration is given to producing communications around the different trigger points for testing and tracing.

Actions:

- The Committee requested that consideration is given to producing communications around the different trigger points for testing and tracing.

3. Properties and Contracts

3.1 Lease Acquisition for Galway West Business Park

The CSO and ND Capital and Estates reviewed with the Committee the briefing papers on the Lease Acquisition for Galway West Business Park which had been circulated in advance of the meeting following a request from the Committees July meeting for supplementary papers on the proposal. The CSO provided information on the context in which the lease is proposed. It was noted that the speed of delivery has been an important consideration in the approach to identifying the long-term option while at the same time determining the optimum overall value for money solution for HSE in terms of the mix of short and long-term accommodation provisions. Clarification was provided to the Committee regarding the right to renew clause and the rent reviews within the lease agreement. The Committee sought further information regarding the fitting out of the unit and the overall value for money provided by the lease.

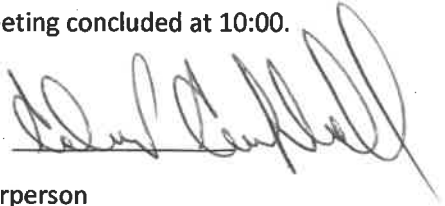
Actions:

- The Committee requested further information on the overall value for money provided by the lease.

6 AOB

The meeting concluded at 10:00.

Signed: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. J. Campbell', written over a horizontal line.

A/Chairperson

10.09.21

Date