



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

**Minutes of HSE Board Meeting
Friday 26th June 2020**

A meeting of the Board of the Health Service Executive was held on Friday 26th June 2020 at 10am by video conference.

Present: Ciarán Devane (Chairperson), Deirdre Madden (Deputy Chairperson), Aogán Ó Fearghaíl, Brendan Lenihan, Fergus O’Kelly, Fergus Finlay, Fiona Ross, Sarah McLoughlin, Yvonne Traynor, Tim Hynes.

In Attendance for Board Meeting:

Paul Reid (CEO), Colm Henry (CCO), Anne O’Connor (COO), Stephen Mulvany (CFO), Dean Sullivan (CSO), Paul Connors (ND Communications), Fran Thompson (CIO) Niamh O’ Bernie, Dara Purcell (Secretary), Niamh Drew, Amy Phillips.

Joined the meeting Yvonne Geoff and Patrick Lynch.

1. Governance and Administration

The Chairperson, Ciarán Devane welcomed members to the meeting.

At the start of the meeting the Board met in the absence of management. No conflicts of interest were declared.

The minutes of the Board meetings held on 27 May and 17 June 2020 were approved.

Re-Appointments of Audit and Risk Committee Members

B. Lenihan, Vice Chairperson of Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) informed the Board the Committee recommended that the four external Committee members - Colm Campbell, Pat Kirwan, Anne Markey and Martin Pitt, whose membership is due to expire, be reappointed for a further two years until 30 June 2022. He confirmed the appointment of these suitably qualified and experienced individuals as external members of the Committee will augment the expertise available to the Committee.

The Board approved the request to reappoint the four members for a period of two years until 30 June 2022 (**Decision number: 260620/25**)

The CEO and Executive Management joined the meeting at 10.15 am

Media Guidance Document

The ND Communications presented the briefing paper circulated prior to the meeting on Board - Public Communications/Commentary. He set out a number of considerations regarding Board communications in situations where a Board member communicates/comments in public on a health or care related matter either on a non-health or care related matter.

A number of issues requiring further consideration and clarity in future drafting were discussed. The situation of Board members making public commentary for example, in an individual capacity, as an advocate or in a professional capacity and not as a Board member needs specific guidance. It was agreed the objective should be to develop guidance and support for Board members regarding public communications rather than adopting a formal policy. The approach to developing this guidance regarding public communications should be based on obligations such as statutory requirement as regards confidentiality, fiduciary duties and code obligations as Board members.

The Board requested the guidance document be redrafted to address the concerns raised and a further iteration circulated for consideration. It was noted members had provided direct feedback on the document to the ND Communications some of which will be addressed in the next draft.

2. Chief Executive Officers Update

The CEO presented his monthly report to the Board setting out a number of key strategic areas and the processes and approaches that need to be worked through in order to deliver them. The CEO highlighted that the organisation has learned a significant amount about its capacity for change during the pandemic. He noted that the HSE's models of care for COVID-19 detection and treatment were built rapidly, and in a crisis scenario and there is now a need to embed sustainable "cohorted" models of care for COVID-19 into future operation models. The delivery of all healthcare services will have to take place in an environment where COVID-19 must be presumed to be present, thus necessitating change in how the HSE delivers care.

The CEO noted the Recovery Planning process underway will harness the positive elements of the organisations response to meet the challenges created by COVID-19 and more significantly, use the opportunity to strategically focus on some of the longstanding issues within the organisation.

He noted in order to begin that process of change the EMT has been re-considering the key strategic priorities for the HSE, and these priorities will hopefully assist with the Board's deliberations on the Corporate Plan preparations for which have resumed.

The Board reviewed with the CEO and EMT the key strategic processes set out in the report in relation to embedding sustainable models of care for COVID-19 detection and treatment, operational service recovery planning, development of sustainable model of testing and tracing, revised financial service planning in 2020 and beyond, the review of the corporate centre HSE, the approach to implementing Sláintecare priorities, progressing Programme for Government priorities and risk management processes.

The CEO said strengthening the governance and operations of testing and tracing to ensure that Ireland has an efficient and effective model is a key priority in controlling the spread of COVID-19. A programme of work has been established to implement a strong, robust, coherent national function and service with end to end responsibility for COVID-19 Testing and Contact Tracing. The HSE Board acknowledged progress to date on the work programme. On the basis of the project timing the CEO will bring back to the July Board meeting the proposed selected model and the alternatives and the implementation approach.

In response to questions from Board members on the impact of the COVID-19 response on funding and service delivery priorities, the CEO stated that the internal financial landscape in the HSE has changed considerably from the forecasts at the start of 2020. Service activity has been impacted significantly both in Acute and Community services with all non-essential services being affected in favour of urgent and time dependent activity. Revised financial and service planning for the remainder of 2020 is underway, and the 2021 estimates process/ NSP is due to commence shortly which will have to consider fiscal restraint in the allocation of next year's health budget.

The CFO confirmed EMT was working to estimate the likely activity to year end, including service-related assumptions. A paper on the financial outlook to year end will be provided to the Board at the next Board meeting

The Board noted the review of the Corporate Centre had been revised and a briefing will be provided to

the Board at its meeting in September 2020. The Board noted the case for change is even more compelling in the context of the reconsideration of the HSE priorities and the Corporate Plan processes and Government policy regarding regional health areas.

The Board considered how the learning's about the HSE capacity for change during the acute stages of COVID-19 can be aligned with the principles and actions of Sláintecare.

The Board emphasised that as the HSE reviews what worked well and plans for the future, the approach to the implementation of Sláintecare and priorities in the draft Programme for Government will have to take account of learning from our response to date, building on successes and harnessing in particular the agility demonstrated across the country. The CEO confirmed the EMT is considering these as part of the corporate planning work and it will be central to the annual National Service Plan 2021.

Risk Management Processes

The Board noted that the organisational confidence built during the pandemic is fragile and it is important to preserve and further develop this. The CEO informed the Board that he has established a small group of EMT members to progress risk mitigation priorities and align them with the development of the Corporate Plan. They are meeting weekly and will feed into EMT and Board meetings as appropriate. The group will work on how to strategically approach areas such as transformational processes, and service continuity.

The CCO provided an update on the work that is being carried out by the 23 COVID-19 response teams to provide proactive and clinical support to areas such as nursing homes. In response to a suggestion that an after-action review be done by HSE on the lessons to be learned from the management of COVID-19 in nursing homes, the CEO noted that the Minister has established an expert panel to review learnings and the HSE will input into this process.

The Board asked the CEO/ EMT about the process for learning from the current pandemic to ensure that the organisation is prepared for a second surge. The CCO said there must be a greater emphasis on the use of other clinicians and services such as physiotherapists to reduce waiting lists and there must be improved communication between GPs and acute hospitals and community hubs set up for COVID-19 reasons could be repurposed to deliver Primary Care Services. It was noted to improve GP referrals there must be a guaranteed pathway of access for GPs to acute services.

The Board suggested that schemes in GP settings such as GP telephone calls, respiratory clinics and out of hours introduced since COVID-19 could be beneficially retained post COVID-19 and the CEO said this

is being investigated.

The HSE's direct involvement in school settings to promote education around COVID-19 related matters was suggested and the CEO said this could be part of Healthy Ireland teams engagement within schools.

2.2 Citywest Hotel and Convention Centre

The paper circulated prior to the meeting setting out an analysis of the options and recommendations for the Citywest Hotel and Convention Centre was noted. The CEO set out the rationale for the acquisition of Citywest Hotel and Convention Centre as a step-down facility for COVID-19 patients as part of the contingency planning for the HSE's response to COVID-19. He confirmed that while the hotel was used to some extent for self-isolation purposes, demand never came close to the capacity provided. The Conference Centre was built out for an intermediate care facility with some high dependency beds, but it was not required as national measures succeeded in reducing the spread of the pandemic. He confirmed that following consideration of options for use the Executive made the decision that Board approval for an extension of the contract beyond the lease in place to 23 October 2020 would not be sought.

In response to questions on the cost per patient served in Citywest, the CFO estimated it to be €600-700 per patient. The Board agreed the discontinuing of the lease was the appropriate decision.

3. Corporate Planning Process

The CSO briefed the Board on the Corporate Plan process now recommenced. He provided an overview of work completed previously during September 2019 - February 2020, the revised approach to delivering the Corporate Plan in the context of COVID-19 and the initial thinking around key service-related objectives for the Corporate Plan, incorporating considerations arising from the Performance & Delivery Committee on 19 June 2020.

He confirmed that given the challenges of operating in a COVID-19 environment and the need to progress key transformation priorities, the immediate focus in relation to the Corporate Plan is to develop a small number of key service-related objectives, with a view to making demonstrable improvements over the corporate planning period. The corporate plan will be informed by Sláintecare, the new Programme for Government, the recovery planning processes, the wider COVID-19 environment, and the macro financial context. It will be a key input to the Estimates process and the National Service Planning process. It is assumed the recovery will consume at a minimum the first 18

months of the Corporate Plan's 3- year timeframe and the Corporate Plan will need to reflect this in its prioritisation of its objectives.

The Board welcomed the update provided and noted the key service focused objectives which were proposed by the EMT are being considered by the P&D Committee and it is planned to have the high level objectives agreed for consideration by the Board at the July meeting and the final Corporate Plan for consideration for approval at the September, 2020 Board meeting

4. Risk Oversight

Briefing – ARC - Risk Management and Assessment of the Corporate Risk Register (CRR)

B. Lenihan presented this item to the Board reporting on the process commenced by the Audit and Risk Committee to assess and provide oversight on the current version of the Corporate Risk Register (and related action plans) that has been prepared by EMT. He noted the ARC had reviewed earlier drafts of the CRR and provided comment and advice and this is the opportunity for the Board as a whole to discuss a detailed EMT draft CRR.

He confirmed a special meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee was held on the 11th June 2020 to consider the revised corporate risk register. The ARC welcomed the focus that has been given to risk by the CEO and EMT and acknowledged that the expression of risk has improved significantly. The ARC had a number of general comments on the revised CRR which will be considered for inclusion in the next EMT version. One question the ARC raised relates to clarifying for planning, risk management and other purposes the likelihood [in terms of % probability] and potential impact of a second wave of COVID 19, particularly in the winter period. The suggestion was made that a decision-making framework for standing services up and down in response to any major resurgence of COVID 19 would be beneficial. The ARC suggested that there would be benefit in conducting an After-Action Review in relation to the COVID-19 response.

He noted that to assist the ARC and the Board in making an assessment of the current version of the risk register of Principal Risks (now 26 in number), together with action/mitigation plans for each of these risks oversight of specific individual risks had been allocated to Board committees and a joint sub group of the ARC and Safety and Quality Committee has been established to review 5 of the 6 new corporate risks identified as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [The financing risk is being retained by ARC]. A guidance document has been prepared to support the Board Committees in their role in supporting risk oversight. It is intended that the relevant EMT risk owners will be asked to meet the sub-group prior to a report being brought back to the ARC by the end of July and the overall process will be led by Fiona Ross. It was suggested that Risk 13 (Cyber Security) be reassigned to the

Performance and Delivery Committee.

ND QAV spoke to the paper circulated prior to the meeting outlining the review of the CRR conducted by EMT during May 2020. He provided a summary of the revised corporate risks, including the risk descriptions, current and previous risk ratings, and risk assessment/control actions. He also provided an overview of the guidance document prepared to support the Board's Committees in their role in supporting the oversight of risk. He advised the revised CRR is more accurate as risks were more effectively captured.

The Board welcomed the work done to develop the CRR as it will significantly help to improve risk management within the organisation going forward.

The Board suggested that the risk of a second pandemic be considered for inclusion on the CRR and that testing, and tracing be considered as a response rather than risk. It was agreed that the ARC Committee will look into that suggestion.

5. Committees Update

5.1 People and Culture

Minutes from the Committee meeting held on 3 April as circulated were noted. The Committee Chairperson Y Traynor provided a verbal update on issues considered at the meeting on 12 June:

- Amended workplan to include occupational health. The HR team are focusing on recovery and embedding new ways of working going forward.
- Paper on employee experience to capture peoples experience during the crisis. Culture audit is a work in progress.
- Draft People Dashboard which will be brought to the board in future meetings.

5.2 Performance and Delivery

Minutes from the Committee meetings held on from 22 May and 8 June as circulated were noted. The Committee Chairperson T Hynes provided a verbal update on issues considered at the meeting on 19 June:

- The development of a Board Scorecard to report on key performance indicators and ongoing work on the Corporate Plan.
- A survey of all Board and Committee members will be undertaken by the Office of the COO to get their perspectives and insights into what should be in the Board Score Card.

5.3 Safety and Quality

Minutes from the Committee meeting held on 21 May 2020 as circulated were noted. The Committee Chairperson D Madden provided a verbal update on the issues considered at the meeting on 17 June:

- Quality Profile Data June 2020
- A workshop is due to be held in September to discuss the Committees requirements regarding quality profile reporting and Patient and Staff experiences
- Chair and CCO gave a brief overview of a report (not yet finalised) on Letterkenny University Hospital following investigation of delayed diagnosis of endometrial cancer. CCO is keeping Chairperson up to date on this. Once this report is finalised the chairperson will report back to the Board on the matter.

5.4 Audit and Risk

Minutes from the Committee meetings held on 12 and 15 May 2020 were noted. The Vice Chairperson B Lenihan provided a verbal update on the Committee meetings held 12 June noting the CRR considered by the ARC at its meeting on 11 June had been considered by the Board earlier in the meeting. The following issues had been considered at the meeting on 12 June:

- The Committee had received a briefing from the C&AG on the close out of the audit of the AFS 2019
- The Committee reviewed the operation of the Health Budget Oversight Group.
- The CFO reported on the Year to Date expenditure to end of April and Covid Expenditure Tracker Report.
- The Committee had also reviewed certain special legislative accounts including the Patient Private Property Accounts 2019.

6. Integrated Information Service - COVID-19 Management Dashboard

Y. Goff joined the meeting for this item. F. Thompson presented an overview on the COVID-19 management Dashboard developed within his division which is used as a mechanism to communicate the HSE's current progress on COVID-19 metrics. Y. Goff provided a demonstration on how to navigate the Dashboard and the information reports and metrics available on the system. The Board welcomed and broadly supported the initiative.

7. Board Development Process

7.1 Board Development Process

The Chair informed the Board on the arrangements for the Board Development Process and noted the work programme is being developed with external support. It was noted the Board Governance Handbook will be circulated by the Secretary to Board Members for review and feedback.

8. AOB

The Board agreed to discontinue the special weekly meetings and to return to their regular monthly meetings.

The Chair thanked all in attendance for their contributions and robust discussions.

The meeting concluded at 16.45

Signed: 

Ciarán Devane

Chairperson

Date: 29th July 2020