



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

## **North East Regional Hospital Location Study**

### **Background**

The North East covers the counties of Louth, Meath, Cavan and Monaghan with a population of 390,000. This area covers a total of 6,498 sq. kilometres.

A review of Health Services in the North East commissioned from and undertaken by Teamwork Management Services Ltd., on behalf of the HSE, was completed in June 2006. The resultant report (Improving safety and achieving better standards, An Action Plan for Health Services in the North East – Teamwork Report) proposes a three-stranded action plan designed to improve health service safety and standards in the N.E. as follows:

- The development of local services, with the existing five hospitals and primary and community care providers playing central roles;
- The development of a new regional acute hospital;
- Binding these local and regional services together through a series of clinical networks, which are centred around the needs of patients.

The report outlines a series of actions to be pursued simultaneously, but delivered in the near, medium and longer terms respectively. The HSE has established a Steering Group and a Project Team structure to progress these provisions within a project framework.

Terms of Reference of the Steering Group are as follows:

- To develop a comprehensive plan for accomplishment of the recommendations contained in the Teamwork Report (Improving safety and achieving better standards, An Action Plan for Health Services in the North East) available on [ww.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie) > publications.
- To oversee and assure implementation of this plan through the Project Team appointed for this purpose.
- To identify a location for the new regional hospital recommended in the Teamwork Report at an early stage
- To ensure continuation of services for the population of the North East over the period of implementation of the reform programme

A Project Team has been established charged with implementing action plan provisions, as set out in the Teamwork Report, under the direction of the Steering Group.

The immediate focus of the Project Team centres on implementation of near and medium term actions contained in the Teamwork Report. In this regard, one of the central proposals to be pursued is establishment of a number of clinical networks in specified key areas. The team will also focus immediately on addressing the near term safety and risk issues identified in the report.

## **New Regional hospital**

The Teamwork report recommended that the North East should have one regional public hospital based on international norms for catchment populations of regional hospitals of between 300,000 and 500,000. In estimating the future catchment population it was assumed that a substantial amount of the current North East planned inpatient work would transfer from Dublin hospitals to a new North East regional hospital. Similarly much of the day case work currently undertaken in Dublin hospitals would transfer to a new regional hospital and other day case facilities in the North East.

The regional hospital will provide 24/7 specialist support and advice across the region through the clinical network system. In turn the regional hospital will be supported by tertiary, highly specialised services outside the region with individual services provided to catchments of 1 to 4 million. These include neurosurgery, cardiac surgery, transplantation surgery and certain paediatric services. The regional and local hospitals will operate as formal clinical networks to provide best quality seamless care to the patient.

## **Location Study**

The location of the regional hospital is a significant element of the new developments. A key priority for the North East Implementation Steering Group is an early decision on the location of the hospital. A sub-committee of that Group called the Hospital Location Group, with additional expert input, has been established to progress this. It has been decided to engage an external consultancy to carry out an independent location study.

The Health Service Executive has invited suitably qualified suppliers to submit a tender to:

- Carry out a detailed location study to consider options for the location of the new regional hospital in the North East
- Recommend a location for the new hospital, using assessment criteria, that is evidentially based.
- Prepare a report for the HSE recommending a location based on the findings of the study.

This study will take account of international best practice, existing national strategy and health policy documents including *Improving safety and achieving better standards. An Action Plan for Health Services in the North East – Teamwork Report*

The report conclusions and recommendations are to be supported by detailed consideration of relevant key criteria including;

- Demographics
- Access
- Interdependencies
- Planning and Development Considerations

### **Demographics**

With the exception of certain tertiary and specialist services the objective is self sufficiency in acute care within the North East for all patients, public and private. A key factor in planning for the services in the regional hospital is the significant projected population growth rates for the North East.

Identification of a minimum catchment population of 300,000 for the new hospital and a mapping exercise of population growth and catchment to the year 2020 are required.

### **Access**

The location must facilitate ease of access to the new hospital for the catchment population and for outreach from the regional hospital to other facilities within the North East.

Consideration is needed of the distance and time for travel of patients requiring regional hospital care by both private and public transport means.

Ease of access for staff is also an important consideration in terms of workforce planning, recruitment and retention.

Consideration of access in the context of the development of the emergency care network is also vital.

This requires a review of current and future transport infrastructural development plans, including road networks and traffic management considerations.

### **Interdependencies**

The role of the regional hospital within a formal clinical network structure in the North East must be considered. The interdependency of the location in the North East with the locations/catchments of current hospitals and planned services development in adjacent areas, are also essential factors in determining the location.

## **Planning and Development Considerations**

The location recommended must have the capacity to accommodate the new regional hospital. Considerations include:

- Capacity to accommodate the new regional hospital
- Identification of land banks/sites which could be considered as potential sites for the new hospital
- Potential planning constraints
- Environmental impact

## **Tender Process**

An EU Tender process is currently underway and is at the tender evaluation stage. It is expected that a consultancy will be engaged by the end of March. It is envisaged that all work and the report will be completed within two months from the date of appointment, unless otherwise agreed.

The North East Implementation Steering Group is overseeing this exercise from the initial project scoping to completion of the report. The Steering Group have appointed a North East Regional Hospital Location Group to undertake the procurement process, monitor project direction and progress and facilitate communication between the external consultancy and the HSE Executive and service providers.

## **Stakeholder Consultation**

A key element of this process will involve the HSE inviting the public and interested parties to make a submission on the hospital location.

The submissions will be analysed by the consultancy as part of the location study.