

**Minutes of Regional Health Forum West meeting was held on
Tuesday, 23rd June 2020 at 2.00pm by Zoom.**

Miontuairiscí Cruinnithe an Fhóiraim Réigiúnach Sláinte a tionóladh Dé Máirt, 23 Meitheamh 2020 ag
2.00 trí súmáil

Chairperson: Cllr John Carroll

Members Present	Members Present (continued)	Apologies
Cllr Declan Bree	Cllr Michael Kilcoyne	Cllr Seamus Morris
Cllr Ciaran Brogan	Cllr Donagh Killilea	Cllr P Roche
Cllr Tom Conaghan	Cllr Cillian Murphy	
Cllr Gerry Crawford	Cllr Martin McLoughlin	Members Absent
Cllr Albert Doherty	Cllr Gerry McMonagle	
Cllr Aisling Dolan	Cllr Martina O'Connor	
Cllr Francis Foley	Cllr Daithí Ó Cualáin	
Cllr Blackie Gavin	Cllr John Sheahan	
Cllr Donal Gilroy	Cllr Tony Ward	
Cllr Felim Gurn		

In attendance:

Tony Canavan, Executive Lead, Regional Health Forum/CEO, Saolta University Health Care Group

Ann Cosgrove, Chief Operating Officer, Saolta University Health Care Group

Breda Crehan-Roche, Chief Officer, Community Healthcare West

Joe Hoare, Assistant National Director of Estates (West)

John Hayes, CHO, Area 1

Maria Bridgeman CO Midwest Community Healthcare

Dr Mai Mannix, Public Health Specialist, Midwest

Norah Owens, Regional Health Forum Office

Marian Cavanagh, Regional Health Forum Office

Anna Lyons, Regional Health Forum Office

732/88/20 Minutes of previous meeting - February, 2020

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the February 2020 were proposed by Cllr Declan Bree, seconded by Cllr Blackie Gavin and adopted.

733/88/20 Matters Arising:

Physiotherapy posts in South Connemara

Cllr D Ó Cualáin asked for an update on when the vacancies in Physiotherapy will be filled in Spiddal and South Connemara.

Action: Breda Crehan Roche to respond Cllr D Ó Cualáin with an update on the vacancies.

Joe Hoare to respond to Cllr D Bree in relation to some additional information regarding the free of charge rental properties.

Action: Cllr D Bree reserved the right to raise this at the next meeting if he has not received a response.

734/88/20 Update on COVID-19

Tony Canavan, CEO, Saolta University Health Care Group and Dr Mai Mannix, Director of Public Health - HSE Mid-West gave an update to the members on COVID 19 followed by updates from the CHO's from their respective areas.

735/88/20 Questions:

W88Q2699 – National Treatment Purchase Fund and Private Hospitals.

Action: Ann Cosgrove agreed to provide Cllr McMonagle with the range of activity and different specialties that will be facilitated via the private hospitals and the National Treatment Purchase Fund.

W88Q2700 – Letterkenny Pathologists Group.

Action: Tony Canavan to provide Cllr Brogan with the response to this question.

Action: Cllr Bree requested that all Members receive a copy of the response issued to Cllr Brogan

W88Q2702 – Number of People who have died of Covid 19 at Mayo University Hospital.

Action: Cllr Kilcoyne requested that it be noted he does not accept the answer could not include deaths in each University hospital

Sacred Heart Hospital Roscommon

Action: Joe Hoare agreed to update Cllr Tony Ward in relation to the Design, Build, and Tender timeframe for Sacred Heart Hospital, Roscommon.

736/88/20 Date & Time of Next Meeting:

The next **Regional Health Forum** meeting will take place on Tuesday, 28th July, 2020 via Zoom at 2pm.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach/Chairman

Adopted at the Regional Health Forum West meeting

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM WEST – 28th JULY 2020

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NUMBER	QUESTION	RAISED BY																								
W89Q2706	Could the HSE West confirm the following in relation the Tuam Health Campus projects:	Cllr D Killilea																								
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Proposed Project</th> <th>Description</th> <th>Capx Allocation to Date:</th> <th>Estimated Capx Required to Fully complete Capital Project</th> <th>Estimates Project Start Date:</th> <th>Estimated Project End Date:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>The Grove Hospital, Tuam Health Campus</td> <td>Mental Health Campus</td> <td></td> <td>€13m</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>New Residential Care Unit, Tuam Health Campus</td> <td>50 Bed High Dependency Unit – Co Funded by Helen & Joe O Toole (RIP)</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>X-Ray/Scan Equipment, Tuam Health Campus</td> <td>Primary Care Centre/Old Health Centre</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Proposed Project	Description	Capx Allocation to Date:	Estimated Capx Required to Fully complete Capital Project	Estimates Project Start Date:	Estimated Project End Date:	The Grove Hospital, Tuam Health Campus	Mental Health Campus		€13m			New Residential Care Unit, Tuam Health Campus	50 Bed High Dependency Unit – Co Funded by Helen & Joe O Toole (RIP)					X-Ray/Scan Equipment, Tuam Health Campus	Primary Care Centre/Old Health Centre				
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The total estimated capital budget required to cover all costs associated with the Grove Mental Health & Early Intervention facilities is approximately €13 million. Expenditure to date has been approximately €355,000. There will be some additional expenditure on design and enabling works in 2020. It is anticipated that the tender documentation will be completed by late August 2020 and that the works will go to tender in September 2020. The intention would be to commence the main construction works in January 2021 subject to overall availability of funding in the HSE Capital Plan 2021. The estimated project completion date is January 2022.

The total estimated capital budget required to cover all costs associated with the Tuam Community Nursing Unit Project is approximately €19 million. This includes the charitable donation contribution of €7.2 million. Expenditure to date is approximately €520,000. There will be some additional expenditure on design and enabling works in 2020. It is anticipated that the tender documentation will be completed by late August 2020 and that the works will go to tender in September 2020. The intention would be to commence the main construction works in January 2021 subject to overall availability of funding in the HSE Capital Plan 2021/2022. The estimated project completion date is May 2022.

In relation to the Tuam Diagnostics project the capital allocation to date has been for design team fees for completion of the required feasibility studies in the amount of €20,000. Layouts for both site options have been developed and a costed feasibility study for each site will be completed in the coming weeks. Estimated capital costs or related timelines have not been finalised as yet.

J. Hoare, Asst National Director Estates (West)

W89Q2707	Could HSE west confirm the closure date of Toghermore House, Tuam, what plans are in place for the moving of the training and disability services and for the property/lands and will an expression of interest be published for interested groups to take the property on. A Reminder: The property was gifted to Galway Co Co Health committee in the 1950's with the clear instruction from Senator RM Burke that it was to be used for the community. This ideal will have to be enforced.	Cllr D Killilea
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The house and campus is used by Mental Health Services. The residents in Toghermore House were transferred to Castlerea some weeks ago to facilitate the works required to refurbish Toghermore House for future use as a Covid 19 Isolation Centre. These residents will be returning to houses in the Tuam area.

The Day Centre, Day Hospital and the Training Centre continue to operate from the campus at present. Activity is reduced because of Covid. The Area Management Team is planning for the resumption of services including day services but, we await national guidance in order to put a final shape on these plans.

In the medium term, relocation of services into Tuam is dependent on the completion of the capital project on the site of the old grove hospital. The tender documentation will be completed by late August and works will go to tender in September.

It is anticipated that the Senior Management Team of Community Healthcare West will deliberate on the proposals received in relation to the future use of the site to support the delivery of healthcare services in the CHO Area.

Please refer to question W89Q2706 which Joe Hoare has responded to.

Breda Crehan- Roche, Chief Officer, Community Healthcare West

W89Q2708	Could the HSE confirm the following in relation to Covid 19 services at the Community Assessment Hub in Merlin Park: The number of Covid related patients that were seen there, the total number of staff re allocated to the Unit and the number of full time staffing already there, the estimated cost of the operation and capital expenditure of same. The total cost of catering for the Unit since the setup of the Covid services there.	Clr D Killilea
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The number of Covid related patients that were seen there was 107. The total number of staff re allocated to the Unit and the number of full time staffing already there are 1 GP, a trainee GP, 6 Nurses, 2 Assistant Public Health Nurses, 1 Physio, 1 Admin Staff and 1 cleaner. The estimated cost of the operation and capital expenditure of same was €125,000. The total cost of catering for the Unit since the setup of the Covid services there was €2,100.

Breda Crehan- Roche, Chief Officer, Community Healthcare West

W89Q2709	How many private residential properties are being rented by HSE Galway City and County and what service users reside in them, what is the rental cost of same by service user type and where are they located by City/Town. What plans have the HSE for purchasing residential properties and do they consult with local authorities before any purchase/renting is confirmed.	Clr D Killilea
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The HSE only directly rents a very small number of private residential properties in Galway City & County. See table below.

Site Code	Site Name	Category	Service	Town	Rental Amount €
GY0007	Inish Meain Nurse's Residence	Primary Care	Nurses Residence	Aran Islands	8,400.00
GY0061	Clifden Sector	Mental Health	Residence (High)	Clifden	N/A
GY0164	Brook House	Mental Health	Residence (High)	Mountbellew	17,290.00
GY0215	Threanrevagh 2	Mental Health	Residence (Low)	Mountbellew	8,781.76
GY0341	Aine's Cottage	Primary Care	Nurses Residence	Inisbofin	7,800

The HSE currently have no active plan for purchasing residential properties in Galway.

J. Hoare, Asst National Director Estates (West)

W89Q2710	Can I get an update on the provision of a Cardiac Catheterisation unit in Sligo University Hospital? This service is much needed in light of the helicopter [weather permitting] or road time travel to Galway. Where a complete blockage {STEMI} a patient is fast tracked for transfer to UCHG but as treatment is recommended within 90min, time is of vital importance.	Clr D Mulvey
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SUH continues to operate a fixed Cath Lab on a weekly basis and now run the service up to 2 days per week. No decision has been made in relation to further expansion of Cath Lab Services in Sligo, pending the outcome of the National Cardiology Review commissioned by the Minister of Health.

A. Cosgrove, COO, Saolta University Health Care Group

W89Q2711	For patients who are recovering from COVID-19, will the HSE provide a medical card to them as they will need ongoing medical supervision and rehabilitation?	Clr D Mulvey
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Medical Card eligibility is primarily based on an assessment of means and is not granted on the basis of any particular medical condition, of itself, (except in limited cases). As part of the application process for Medical Card eligibility,

applicants are invited to provide comprehensive information in relation to the costs associated with any illness and the care needs of the applicant and/or any dependants. In the event that an applicant's means are above the financial threshold for the grant of Medical Card eligibility, other factors outlined in the application in relation to the burden of illness are taken into consideration and eligibility may be granted where it is deemed appropriate to exercise discretion because of the undue burden on the applicant and /or any dependants.

Jane Regan, National Medical Card Unit

W89Q2712	Can a CARE DOC facility be established at the new primary health centre at Ballymote as there is no GP on call after 6pm in Co Sligo? There is only one facility covering all of Co Sligo and beyond, There is a precedent of other counties having more than 1 facility and in light of the large demographic rural area of Co Sligo. As this service is a precursor to admission to hospital for some clients, can the HSE make a statement on this?	Cllr D Mulvey
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The GP Out of Hours service covering Sligo and North Leitrim is provided by service arrangement through Caredoc and operates from the Barrack Street Primary Care Centre in Sligo. GP Out of Hours services provide an emergency out of hours family doctor service for patients with urgent medical problems who need to contact a doctor after regular surgery hours. A telephone nursing support service is also provided and callers have access to an experienced nurse in the out of hour's service.

Looking specifically at the area of Ballymote, service data for 2019 shows an average of 11 patients per week from that area needing a face-to-face consultation with a duty GP in Caredoc. 50% of these consultations were on weekdays and 50% at weekends. In addition to centre based consultations, there were 117 home visits provided in 2019 for patients in the Ballymote area who were not well enough to travel to the Barrack Street Primary Care Centre.

The Sligo Caredoc service has been operational for the past four years and to date distance has not been raised as an issue. Patients availing of the service usually do so, only on an infrequent basis as it is an emergency service. The current location of Caredoc means that if needed by patients, there is close proximity to Sligo University Hospital should a patient require referral to the Emergency Department there.

Various counties do have differing GP Out of Hours arrangements in place as there is no single model of service agreed nationally. Caredoc provides GP Out of Hours services in a number of other CHO areas and confirms that distances travelled to centres are much greater in other CHOs and counties than the distance between Ballymote and Sligo.

John Hayes, Chief Officer, CHO1

W89Q2713	Has any plans/discussions taken place by HSE/Saolta to locate a Centre of Excellence for Diabetes in the North West and if so can I be given an update?	Cllr G McMonagle
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Currently adult diabetes services are provided for in both SUH and LUH, along with services provided by CHO service. The paediatric service is supported by a Consultant Paediatrician in SUH who has governance over the Insulin Pump Service in the North West. A new Diabetes Unit is due to be completed in SUH in late 2020 to support this service.

There is currently 1wte Consultant Endocrinologist in place in LUH with approval now received to appoint another permanent 1 wte, currently there is a locum in place. The Diabetic Service in LUH is supported by Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) and (candidate) Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP). There are 2 Adult CNSs, 1 Paediatric CNS, and 1 cANP in Paediatrics. There is support provided from the community by a CNS for 1 clinic per week. In Paediatrics LUH has 1 RANP and 1CNS in post. The service is also supported by 0.7 dietician post and 0.8 Podiatrist post.

Ann Cosgrove, COO, Saolta University Health Care Group

W89Q2714	How many of the nineteen beds at the Short Stay Ward in Letterkenny are now open?	Cllr G McMonagle
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All of the 19 Short Stay Beds are open and staffed in LUH.

T. Canavan, CEO, Saolta University Health Care Group

W89Q2715	Can I have an update on where the Neuro Rehab three year implementation strategy launched by Health Minister Simon Harris in February 2019 is at and can I be informed of the services available to neurological disability patients in Donegal?	Cllr G McMonagle
<p>CHO 1 have established a working group with a focus on the mapping of existing services. The group have linked closely with the National Neuro Rehab Lead to ensure that CHO 1 is aligned to the national rollout strategy.</p> <p>In terms of Donegal services there are two Case Managers for people with Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI) and two Case Managers for people with Physical and Sensory disability (other than ABI). There are two Keyworkers with Multiple Sclerosis Ireland under Service Level Arrangement that work closely with our Community Neurological Rehabilitation Team (CNRT)</p> <p>The Community Neurological Rehabilitation Team operates on a part time basis with one full time Clinical Neuropsychologist, a part time Speech and Language Therapist and two part time Occupational Therapists. The need for a Physiotherapist on this team is highlighted as a gap both in service planning and cost estimates.</p> <p><i>John Hayes, Chief Officer, CHO1</i></p>		
W89Q2716	How many new Nursing and Doctor Posts have been filled at LUH since the beginning of the Covid 19 Pandemic and are these Positions Full Time and Long Term appointments?	Cllr G McMonagle
<p>37 additional nurses were employed since the beginning of COVID-19. 23 of these nurses were offered a permanent contact & 14 on a temporary contract.</p> <p>31 doctors were employed since the beginning of COVID-19. 20 New Interns as part of the National agreement, with 10 new vacancies filled with 6 months contracts. In addition 1 Permanent Consultant Gastroenterologist has commenced employment on a permanent basis.</p> <p><i>Ann Cosgrove, COO, Saolta University Health Care Group</i></p>		
W89Q2717	What is the update of the vacant houses owned by the health board in Donegal Town and surrounding areas?	Cllr T Conaghan
<p>The current status is similar to that advised earlier this year in response to W85Q2637. The HSE intends to progress the transfer of the two houses in Claredon Drive, Donegal Town to Donegal County Council. The next step in the process is for a formal valuation to be undertaken by Valuation office. A formal decision will then be required and legal formalities would then need to be concluded. The request was submitted in early March 2020 just before the COVID restrictions to the Valuation office for valuations on the above HSE owned properties. We are awaiting a response regarding the anticipated timeframe to have the valuations undertaken.</p> <p><i>J. Hoare, Asst National Director Estates (West)</i></p>		
W89Q2718	When will the maternity hospital in Limerick start up antenatal classes again and begin to allow fathers and partners to visit their new-borns in the hospital now that the country is reopening?	Cllr S Hartigan
<p>In line with Covid 19 requirements to maintain social and physical distancing, University Maternity Hospital Limerick (UMHL) is currently unable to provide face to face antenatal classes. The Parentcraft education midwifery team have commenced a pilot project of virtual online antenatal classes, which will be evaluated and will then inform our decision on the roll out of a programme of virtual classes.</p> <p>With the assistance of UL Hospital Communication department we are also currently developing a virtual tour of the admission to labour ward journey and once ready this will be available on UL/UMHL website.</p> <p>Women attending their booking appointment in UMHL are being informed of the HSE website link to "mychild.ie, which provides important, and useful information and videos on pregnancy and baby health for parents and parents to be</p> <p>Visitor restrictions were introduced in UMHL in March 2020 in light of the Covid 19 Pandemic. These restrictions included limiting visiting in our Neonatal Department to mothers only. These measures are in line with Government Guidelines not to permit visiting in Hospitals from March 30th 2020. The hospital regrets the impact that these restrictions have on patients and relatives which were introduced to help protect the health of patients and staff at the hospital and also the</p>		

wider community. To minimise the impact of the Neonatal restrictions the hospital launched a secure video messaging platform to keep parents in touch with their new-born babies in the Neonatal Unit. The adoption of the vCreate platform in the Hospital was prompted by the visitor restrictions and is a very valuable communication tool which we will use to support parents who cannot visit the Hospital themselves.

As part of the Government Emergence Roadmap the issue of visitor restrictions is due to be reviewed in Phase 5 (10th August). UMHL is currently carrying out a survey among mothers and staff in the Hospital seeking their feedback in relation to our visiting policy. For the present the restrictions will remain in place but we look forward to relaxing them and will be guided in this by the Government, NPHET, our colleagues in the HSE and our own expert staff. The safety of mothers and babies, their loved ones and our staff will be the primary consideration in lifting visitor restrictions.

C. Cowan, CEO, UL Hospital Group

W89Q2719	Can I have an updated report on the rheumatology services available here to Donegal patients in Donegal and any plan we have to enhance our services?	ClIr C Brogan
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North West Rheumatology team attend Letterkenny on a weekly basis. They provide outpatient face to face consultation services and an in-patient consult service.

In the current COVID environment they see urgent patients who cannot be managed by virtual consultation in face to face clinics - this is the same for Sligo and Leitrim.

They do not provide inpatient, day services or infusion services in Letterkenny and they have no active plans to develop this service in LUH.

Plans for any expansion of services are the same for Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim and Mayo and they primarily involve a move towards delivery of chronic disease management in the community in line with the Slaintecare goals.

T. Canavan, CEO, Saolta University Health Care Group

W89Q2720	Can I have an updated report on the cardiology service available to patients at LGH and any steps we have to enhance the service?	ClIr C Brogan
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The Cardiology Unit in Letterkenny Hospital provides a comprehensive cardiology service to the community in the North West. Urgent cardiology services continued over the last number of months and the hospital is continuing to restore routine services that may have temporarily paused while the hospital was dealing with COVID 19 patients.

Services currently being provided include:

- Out Patient clinics
- Heart Failure clinics
- Cardiac Rehabilitation programme
- AICD and CRT clinics
- Echocardiography service
- Transoesophageal Echocardiography Service
- Holter monitoring
- Exercise testing
- Permanent Pacemaker implantation
- Loop Recorder implantation
- AICD implantation
- Bi-ventricular Pacemaker implantation
- Syncope evaluation
- Electrophysiology studies including radio frequency ablations

Ann Cosgrove, COO, Saolta University Health Care Group

W89Q2721	Can we updated report on the current bed situation at LGH and the current staffing levels and what steps are being taken on recruiting additional staff ?	ClIr C Brogan
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We have created an additional 38 beds on two separate refurbished sites within the LUH campus – Medical 6 and 7 – this brings the total number of beds in the hospital to 391. These additional beds provide us with capacity to deal with increases in the number of suspected and confirmed COVID 19 cases. We have sought approval for the additional staffing

required to fully open these extra beds through the Winter Planning process.		
T. Canavan, CEO, Saolta University Health Care Group		
W89Q2722	Can I be provided with an update on the delivery of the primary care centre proposed for Kilrush?	Cllr C Murphy
Expressions of interest were sought by the HSE regarding the potential development of a Primary Care Centre in Kilrush. The HSE is in receipt of Stage 2 submissions and a number of sites have been short listed based on same.		
J. Hoare, Asst National Director Estates (West)		
W89Q2723	Can I be provided with details of what, if any, extra resources are provided to the ambulance service in West Clare during July and August to take account of the huge swing in population from urban areas to coastal communities for the summer tourism season	Cllr C Murphy
The NAS is a demand-led service serving the whole population of the state, working in conjunction with the Dublin Fire Brigade, Irish Air Corps, Irish Coast Guard, Irish Community Rapid Response and at a community level with First Responder teams. The NAS operates a singular platform for all call taking and dispatch and utilises a range of models to respond to emergency and urgent calls, and transports intermediate care patients and operates an adult, paediatric and neonatal critical care and retrieval service. As part of the long term evolution of the service the NAS is transitioning from an Emergency Medical Service to a Mobile Medical Service as it integrates more with community and other health care provider services across the State. The National Ambulance Service operates on national basis not on a county basis. This allows for dynamic deployment of resources, which best meets the needs of patients.		
Bill Forbes, Acting Chief Ambulance Officer, NAS West		
W89Q2724	Can I be provided with an explanation as to why the NAS/HSE do not provide volunteer community first responder groups with replacement defibrillators pads and an estimated annual cost of doing so.	Cllr C Murphy
The NAS and community first responder schemes operate under the National Ambulance Service (NAS) Policy, Community AED, Cardiac First Responder Scheme, policy nr NASCG007 . The policy is available on the National Ambulance Service website http://www.nationalambulance.ie/Clinical%20Care/Clinical-Directives-Advisories/NASCG007-Community-AED-Cardiac-First-Responder-Scheme.pdf . The roles and responsibilities of NAS and the CFR groups is clearly detailed within.		
Bill Forbes, Acting Chief Ambulance Officer, NAS West		
W89Q2725	1) Covid -19 Response. The coalition government is seeking to add an additional 2 Billion euro to deal with the Covid -19 emergency. If (when) approved by the Oireachtas, the revised spending on health will exceed 20 billion euro for the first time. If the pandemic reduces the income of the HSE in 2020 below what has been budgeted for, a supplementary estimate may be necessary on that basis ALONE. 2) Spend in Covid -19 response has included et al, 320 million euro on personal protective equipment (PPE), 115 million estimated per month cost of takeover of private hospitals, 20 million lease of City West Hotel(ends in Oct) 109 Hotels, guest houses, student accommodation, 1300 community bed nights, This question related to the NOTE above: What spend related to above and the Covid -19 was dedicated to CHO 1? How has the deferral of treatment for patients during the pandemic affected non pandemic public care and waiting lists for patients in the North West? What preparations, action steps, guidance and advice from the Expert Advisory Group are in situ in CHO 1 counter a second Covid -19 wave or surge?	Cllr A Doherty

Costs incurred to date in CHO1 in responding to Covid19 total €6.3m including:

Service response / reconfiguration	€3.5m
Equipment and appliances	€1.7m
Primary Care assessment hubs / testing	<u>€1.1m</u>
Total	<u>€6.3m</u>

These costs exclude costs incurred nationally on behalf of all CHO's including PPE, testing kits, set up costs for Community Assessment Hubs etc. A breakdown of such expenditure is not currently available by CHO.

All frontline clinical services were impacted by national Governments response to Covid 19 which was advised by NPHE. This included reducing all services except emergency and those considered essential.

During the Covid 19 pandemic period up to Phase 4, direct interventions were paused in line with Prevention Control (IPC) and Public Health guidelines in Disability Services CHO 1. This had an impact on direct contacts for waiting lists for initial referrals, joint assessments, therapeutic interventions and Assessment of Need for Children's Services. Therapeutic interventions and services were also paused in Adults Services.

Services were curtailed significantly with the Government's instructions to "Stay at Home" etc., and this instruction had the effect of reducing access to face to face appointments such as Physio, Occupational Therapy, Social Work, Psychology etc. This, by its very nature, reduced the activity and increased waiting lists.

Remote contact and support was provided and prioritised according to need and urgent interventions, where required, were facilitated on site in line with strict IPC and Public Health guidelines. Tele health options such as Attend Anywhere were in place where meetings were required.

The current data collection systems were not aligned to record these non-face to face interventions but this will be addressed in the 2021 minimum data set as the new post Covid 19 service delivery way of working.

There are no issues with deferral of treatment on clients in training services in CHO1. Issues with clients requiring supports from home who had no access to training services were dealt with on an individual basis and one to one, face to face provision put in place where necessary..

In line with Return to Work Safely protocols, services are now preparing for the repatriation of staff and resumption of services in line with Government guidelines.

The HSE has looked to reinforce the infrastructure in preparation for the second potential wave of Covid 19. In the absence of definitive treatment e.g. a proven vaccine and proven pharmaceutical therapy, CHO 1 is following the Expert Advisory Groups advice and is looking to improve support in Public Health by enhancing the communicable disease surveillance, bolstering case management and data entry teams, utilising the new Covid tracker app, and incorporating evolving evidence into all messaging about second wave to the public

John Hayes, Chief Officer, CHO 1

W89Q2726	Milltown House Carndonagh. (Hydrotherapy and Respite) How have the Friends of JCM responded to the "heads of terms" forwarded to their solicitor early June 2020 by the HSE. How will the terms and response affect the provision of Hydrotherapy facilities previously available for many clients at Milltown House?	Cllr A Doherty
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The HSE continue to engage with the Friends of James Connolly Hospital with a view to finalising an agreement regarding the future use of Milltown House. It is envisaged that the HSE will lease the facility and continue to provide care for people with a Disability.

John Hayes, Chief Officer, CHO 1

W89Q2727	What are the updates with contracts, completion for the capital construction works and enabling works for Carndonagh Community Hospital and Bunclara?	Cllr A Doherty
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The Contractor has been appointed for the construction works. The enabling works for the decant ward area at Bunclara are nearing completion. The main works at Carndonagh are due to commence in the next two weeks, following decant of

patients to Buncrana. The current timeframe for completion of the works is July 2021.

John Hayes, Chief Officer, CHO 1

W89Q2728	What finance, occupancy arrangements and timetabling is in place and agreed for the decongregation of residents at James Connolly Memorial home in Carndonagh and is the occupancy of Dunshenny House solely dependent on the JCM decongregation process proceeding?	Cllr A Doherty
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The HSE submitted a detailed decongregation plan for the JCM, Carndonagh which has been fully costed.

The process is planned to commence during Quarter 1, 2021 and to be completed by end of Quarter 2, 2022. Dunsheeny House forms part of this Decongregation plan.

John Hayes, Chief Officer, CHO

W89Q2729	What is the up to date position in relation to the modular build at Mayo University Hospital? When was approval sought from the Department, cost of same, how much has been approved, has planning permission been applied for and when is it expected to commence?	Cllr M Kilcoyne
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A proposal is being progressed to provide a temporary modular unit at Mayo University Hospital. This unit would provide additional treatment cubicles and increase capacity as an interim measure. The project is being progressed as COVID Emergency works for Winter 2020 and as such is exempt for the requirement to obtain planning permission. Separately a feasibility study is currently being finalised to scope a proposed project for a rapid build permanent extension to the current Emergency Department along with the relocation of the Medical Assessment Unit to the first floor of the proposed extension. This feasibility study will establish the overall project cost estimate and approval will then be sought to progress the project in 2021.

J. Hoare, Asst National Director Estates (West)

W89Q2730	How many people are currently on the waiting list at Mayo University Hospital, how many have been waiting less than one year, how many have been waiting 1-2 years, 2-3 years and over 3 years?	Cllr M Kilcoyne
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Waiting Lists – Mayo University Hospital

	Outpatients	Inpatients
Currently on Waiting List	9,484	2,654
Waiting less than one year	4,979	1,923
Waiting 1-2 Years	2,147	578
Waiting 2-3 years	1,187	138
Waiting over 3 years	1,171	15

A. Cosgrove, COO, Saolta University Health Care Group

W89Q2731	Have the income limit changes for Medical Card eligibility which were provided for in the last budget been implemented?	Cllr M Kilcoyne
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We cannot advise when these changes will come into effect. PCRS are still awaiting Department of Health to pass legislation through Houses of Oireachtas. We cannot provide any direction on Reassessment of applications for the increase of the Over 70 thresholds at this time.

Jane Regan, National Medical Card Unit

W89Q2732	When will the full Day Care Service re-commence at the Sacred Heart Hospital, Castlebar and the McBride Home, Westport?	Cllr M Kilcoyne
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HSE National Older People Services is currently awaiting clarification and guidance from the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) regarding the re-opening of Day Care Services across its Older People Services. When guidance has been received by Community Healthcare West a plan will be put in place for the Day Care services to recommence, if it is safe to do so.

Please note that at all times the HSE's priority is to provide safe services to its clients attending a Day Service.

Breda Crehan- Roche, Chief Officer, Community Healthcare West

W89Q2733	How many people in the Connemara area are awaiting Community Occupational Therapy Assessment and review? How many Community Occupational Therapists are currently employed in the Connemara area in a permanent/full time position? How many vacant community occupational therapist posts are currently in Connemara? How are referrals made to the Community Occupational Therapists?	Cllr D Ó Cualáin
<p>There are 250 clients waiting - i.e. 199 Waiting for Assessment and 51 for a Review. 1 Full Time i.e. 37 hours per week (Adult Service); 3 Part-time i.e. 1 at 31.71 hours and 1 at 33.83 hours per week (Adult Service) and 1 Part-time at 32 hours per week (EIS Service) There are currently 2 Community Occupational Therapists vacancies in Connemara</p> <p>Referrals can be accepted via Email, Scanned referrals, FAX, Post, telephone and by hand submitted from Allied Health Professionals e.g. PHNs, Physiotherapists, RGNs, GPs, Social Workers, Psychologist; from Family Member(s), Self-Referrals from Clients, Hospital OTs, Hospital Consultants, Galway Hospice OTs, Schools, Teachers on a completed Community Occupational Therapy referral form.</p> <p>Breda Crehan- Roche, Chief Officer, Community Healthcare West</p>		
W89Q2734	Is a HSE run special care dentistry service available in Galway for adults and children who have physical disabilities, hearing or sight loss, intellectual disability, emotional or mental difficulties, a serious or long-term illness, and/or difficulty using social services as is the case in a number of other counties in Ireland? How many adults and children in Galway are awaiting this special dentistry service? Where are these patients currently being referred to and treated?	Cllr D Ó Cualáin
<p>Adults (over 16) with special care needs usually have a medical card and often access care through the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) in a practice contracted to provide care. Patients can be referred from DTSS to HSE if they have additional requirements and the practice setting are unable to facilitate them.</p> <p>Galway HSE Special Care Dental Service receives referrals from private practices, hospital service and residential centres. HSE Dentists routinely assess patients who have high needs, adults and children, particularly in residential centres, and refer them on to the Special Care Team if required.</p> <p>The waiting list for an assessment for adults is 46 and 28 for children. Approximately 70 referrals for assessment are received per year by the Special Care Team. The outcome of assessment will determine if GA hospital theatre service is needed. Following assessment, their care needs can be determined and planned for.</p> <p>Patients routinely attend HSE and DTSS Dentists for assessment and treatment and are referred if more care needed to the HSE Galway Dental Special Care Team, Oromaxillofacial Surgery (OMFS) UHG, Dublin Dental Hospital (DDH), Children's Health Ireland (CHI) Crumlin and Roscommon.</p> <p>The Special care team has a Clinic in Merlin and a theatre slot in UHG. Patients are referred to a pre-anaesthetic assessment service, if UHG Theatre is planned. Access to theatre UHG has just been restored having been closed due to Covid 19 since early 2020.</p> <p>Breda Crehan- Roche, Chief Officer, Community Healthcare West</p>		
W89Q2735	Can I receive an update in relation to the progress being made on the development of a new ward for Cardiothoracic Services in G.U.H? Is funding in place for this project and what timelines are in place for commencement and completion of this new ward? Are there any issues in relation to progressing this project?	Cllr D Ó Cualáin
<p>We are working with Estates and HSE nationally to seek to recommence this project. The plan is to recreate the cardiothoracic ward in a section of the first floor of the hospital, however it has been challenging to find alternative accommodation for the current services in that location and therefore the cardiothoracic ward development has been delayed. Alternative accommodation is now in place and work has begun to vacate the space. We are working with Estates regionally and nationally to reactivate the funding for this project and to progress the ward creation as soon as possible.</p> <p>T. Canavan, CEO, Saolta University Health Care Group</p>		

W89Q2736	What is the current position in relation to the reopening of the community Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centre that was based at Merlin Park prior to it's closure in 2013? How many people used the service prior to it's closure in 2013? Where have and are people being treated since 2013? How many people are currently awaiting Drug and alcohol treatment in Galway? What plans and funding are in place to reopen the centre?	Cllr D Ó Cualáin
<p>Community Healthcare West has no plans to reopen the Addiction Treatment Centre on the grounds of the Merlin Park campus.</p> <p>This service was historically a mental health based service and since that building was closed following a fire, mental health services has prioritised services to those individuals who have co-morbid substance abuse and mental health problems. This is in line with national Mental Health policy "Sharing the Vision". The current mental health addiction services are community based and delivered by addiction counsellors under the guidance of locally based Community Mental Health Teams. Priority for mental health addiction services is given to those when the primary diagnosis is mental health.</p> <p>The HSE is committed to building further capacity within Primary Care services to address excessive alcohol consumption through early intervention screening, brief advice and effective services for dependency.</p> <p>The further development of a network of community based addiction services would be considered a higher priority than reopening the Addiction Treatment Centre on the grounds of the Merlin Park Campus. We welcome the recent allocation from the Minister for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy, Frank Feighan TD, of over €220,000 to Community Healthcare West for Galway. The Regional Drugs Co-ordinator will be organising meetings in the near future in relation to this development.</p> <p>The Addiction Counsellor is an active member of the community Multidisciplinary Teams, as recommended in Vision For Change. It advocates the Addiction Counsellor should be a member of a team. The Addiction Counsellors in Galway/Roscommon Mental Health Services are supported by the Multidisciplinary Teams in providing a comprehensive holistic plan of care for the service user.</p> <p><i>Breda Crehan- Roche, Chief Officer, Community Healthcare West</i></p>		
W89Q2737	Does the HSE give the Gardaí any type of training to equip them to deal with individuals who may be suffering from a severe mental illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar effective disorder or is this something that should or could be part of training at Templemore college?	Cllr C Brogan
<p>The Mental Health Act Legislation Group provide training on aspects of the MHA 2001, i.e section 12/13/9 and related HSE policies in practice nationally.</p> <p>In each of the Community Health Organisation (CHO) within the Approved Centres, there are HSE Garda Liaison Group/forum established to discuss aspects of the agreed MOU between the HSE and the Garda, click here for the attached link. Terms of reference are also attached under Appendix 1. This is in line with those agreed nationally by the Chief Superintendents and the Assistant National Director and pertains to sections of the Mental Health Act, 9/12/13. Meetings occur quarterly. New forms etc/ any learning issues in practice / training are on that agenda and discussed at MOU meetings. See attached and standing agenda.</p> <p>Areas hold training afternoons to discuss learning / case studies and interagency work under the forum of the MOU. This is under the remit of the Clinical Director.</p> <p>The HSE will provide the Garda with access to the latest new on line eLearning module with case studies including the Garda role, to include pathways to admission.</p> <p>The Garda have access to a rostered Consultants Psychiatrist from the National Forensic Service as part of an onsite negotiation team, if required 24 hour, seven day a week, 365 days per year.</p> <p>In addition, the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) works with the Garda College in Templemore to ensure</p>		

that suicide prevention training is delivered to all trainee Gardaí. The completion of SafeTALK and ASIST training is a requirement of the BA in Applied Policing for all Garda Trainees in the Foundation Programme. The HSE NOSP has recently completed a pilot of SafeTALK training with existing members of the force through the Garda Human Rights Unit. The NOSP's suicide bereavement training is also offered to Gardaí through HSE Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention around the country.

Jim Ryan, Assistant National Director, Head of Operations, Mental Health

W89Q2738	Can the forum receive an update on plans to develop a new purpose built base for Ambulance Staff at Galway University Hospital?	Cllr J Connolly
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The Ambulance Service working with estates has gone to tender for a new ambulance base on the Merlin park site. It is expected that the tender will be awarded over the next number of weeks.

B. Forbes, A/Chief Ambulance Officer, National Ambulance Service

W89Q2739	The 2 voluntary agencies in Galway providing services and supports for people experiencing homelessness on behalf of the HSE (Galway Simon Community and Cope Galway) have experienced cuts in funding amounting to millions of euros since 2010, resulting in those employed to respond to the country's worst homeless crisis being severely disadvantaged and under resourced. In addition to this the HSE communicated a further 0.7% cut to funding in 2020. What will the HSE in the West Region do to support these agencies in their work in terms of reversing the recent funding cut, and seeking to address funding shortfalls overall.	Cllr J Connolly
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Firstly, I wish to acknowledge the excellent work carried out by both Simon and COPE in the delivery of services to vulnerable groups in our communities.

The decision to apply a cut in the budget allocation is a national one, on foot of a difficult budgetary situation for 2020 in Primary Care services.

Discussions are ongoing between HSE management and management of both Simon and COPE around these issues and should additional resources become available to Community Healthcare West, it will be dispersed appropriately to the relevant agencies involved.

Breda Crehan-Roche, Chief Officer, Community Healthcare West

W89Q2740	Could Management inform the Forum on the number and type of positions within the services of Primary Care in each county of CHO Area 2 that became vacant in 2019? How many of these vacant positions have been filled since they became vacant, how many remain to be filled and when is the intention to fill the positions?	Cllr J Connolly
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Number of Vacancies in Primary Care for 2019 – 83.58

Posts filled to date – 42.72

Current 2019 vacancies in Primary Care - 40.86

Galway PC Vacancies 16.08	Health & Social Care Professionals – 7.69	6.69 - Approved & being processed (3 posts accepted) 1 - Approved & on hold
	Management/Admin - 1.39	0.39 - Approved & being processed (post accepted) 1 – Approved & on hold
	Medical/Dental – 1.4	1.4 - Approved & being processed – 1.4 with NRS
	Nursing – 5.6	4.6 - Approved & being processed (3 posts accepted)

		1 – Not approved by ND
Galway PC Vacancies filled to date 30.98		
Mayo PC Vacancies 21.48	Health & Social Care Professionals – 10.04	6.04 – Approved & being processed (2 posts accepted) 2 - Not approved by ND 2 - Approved & on hold
	Management/Admin - 3.04	1.04 – Approved & being processed 1.5 - Not approved by ND 0.5 - Approved & unable to fill
	Medical/Dental – 2.2	2 – Approved & being processed (2 posts accepted) 0.2 – Not approved by ND
	Nursing – 5.8	2 - Approved & being processed (1 post accepted) 3.8 - Not approved by ND
Mayo PC Vacancies filled to date 6.88		
Roscommon PC Vacancies 3.3	Health & Social Care Professionals – 2.6	1.6 - Approved & being processed (1 post accepted) 1 – Not approved by ND
	Medical/Dental – 0.2	0.2 - Not approved by ND
	OPCC – 0.5	1 – Approved and being processed (post accepted)
Roscommon PC Vacancies filled to date 4.86		

Breda Crehan-Roche, Chief Officer, Community Healthcare West

W89Q2741	How many pharmacists in Galway City are participants in the Opioid Substitution Treatment Scheme? How many patients are registered on the central treatment list for each of the participating pharmacies?	Cllr J Connolly
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Total number of pharmacies:	15
Total number of patients:	108
Number of pharmacies where numbers are less than 10:	11
Number of pharmacies where numbers are more than 10:	4
Number of patients in pharmacies where numbers are less than 10:	42
Number of patients in pharmacies where numbers are more than 10:	66

Breda Crehan-Roche, Chief Officer, Community Healthcare West

W89Q2742	What had been the take up of "Attend anywhere" in CHO Area 1 County by County	Cllr G Crawford
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During the current Covid-19 Pandemic video conferencing has enabled clinicians to support patient's/service users online. The HSE is now using Attend Anywhere a web based video conferencing tool to provide video consultations to patient's/service users through virtual clinics known as 'waiting rooms'. It is a simple, safe, easy to use and reliable technology for both patients and clinicians. The system has been designed and tested specifically for use in clinical settings and is widely use in the NHS Scotland and in Australia.

The rapid rollout of Attend Anywhere (May 2020 to date) is an exciting and innovative contribution to service continuance during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The rollout is being led by the National Virtual Health Team – with excellent training and support available to local Services. As of the 15th July 2020 there have been 14,000 consultations using Attend Anywhere with approximately 2,000 patients using the service on a weekly basis and 642 virtual waiting rooms established across the

country.

CHO 1 has established an Attend Anywhere Project Team with representatives from all service areas to support implementation. Overall we have seen an excellent uptake of Attend Anywhere across CHO 1 Services and we have been to the forefront and an early adopter of Attend Anywhere as the area has been involved in the EU funded INTERREG VA mPower Project and a number of services i.e Physiotherapy had been using Attend Anywhere. To date, 1,500 Attend Anywhere consultations have taken place by 206 service providers, with 80 virtual waiting rooms now in place.

The deployment of Attend Anywhere ensures patients can be seen in virtual clinics via video link, a key factor in reducing face to face appointments and in turn the possible spread of Covid-19 in the community. Video appointments allow us to provide quality care while keeping patients/service users and staff safe.

Appointments are arranged in the usual way with patients receiving a link to their online consultation via email or text. No special accounts, passwords, software or dial-ins are needed, only an internet enabled device such as a smart phone, tablet or laptop. Upon clicking the link patients enter their own private online waiting room, where they are met by their clinician for an on-screen appointment. The clinician and patient can see and speak to each other as well as share and discuss documents like test results, letters and case notes. It's also a great way for family members and carers to be involved with discussions about a person's care and treatment, as up to five people can take part from different devices. Appointments are strictly confidential and conversations are not recorded and will not leave a digital foot print.

Please see the May- 15th July 2020 (to date) activity available for CHO 1 area, unfortunately it is not possible to disaggregate the activity for Cavan/Monaghan and Sligo/Leitrim areas in respect of your question.

Areas	Total No of Consultations	Total No. of Consultation Hours	No of Service Providers	Total No. of Waiting Rooms
Donegal	682	225 hrs	189	31
Sligo/Leitrim	724	275 hrs	221	28
Cavan/Monaghan	178	67 hrs	145	21
Total	1,584	567 hrs	555 Registered (206 Active)	80

Table 1: CHO 1 Attend Anywhere Activity 1st May-15th July 2020

Attend Anywhere is still in the early stages of implementation, however the use of this new technology as an integral part of health service delivery is increasing, because of the many benefits it can provide during and post COVID 19. These include a reduced risk of infection as physical distancing can be maintained; an additional choice of engagement for the patient/client with his/her service provider; an alternative to travel to a clinic saving time, money and potentially the need for a family member to take time off work to accompany a relative to an appointment.

It is acknowledged that the medium of video call consultation is not suitable for every service or indeed every patient/client, but it provides a viable alternative to a telephone or face to face consultation. The HSE looks forward to the further roll out of Attend Anywhere to support as many patient's/service users in the weeks and months ahead. We are also exploring the establishment of Tech Hubs whereby people who do not have access to a laptop, smart phone or tablet could attend and use the technology.

John Hayes, Chief Officer, CHO1

W89Q2744	What measures are in place to help Staff in CHO Area 1 who may feel in need of support as a result of the pressures of work in this Pandemic?	Cllr G Crawford
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CHO1 COVID-19 Staff Supports

A wide range of staff supports have been available to HSE staff during the Pandemic. A number of new initiatives were developed to provide additional supports to Healthcare Staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these supports were available to staff in HSE Community Healthcare Area 1, staff within Saolta and RCSI Hospitals, those in private and voluntary residential / day-care facilities. A specific CHO 1 Psychosocial Working Group led by a HSE Principal Clinical Psychologist with membership from Occupational Health/Employee Support Services, Staff Health & Wellbeing, Health Promotion and Improvement and the National Counselling Service was established to respond to the Psychosocial needs of staff and the wider community.

A Summary of Supports available to Staff

1. Line/Service Managers have played a pivotal role in supporting staff during the Pandemic thus far. Staff supervision meetings, wellbeing check ins at the start of work, safety pauses etc.
2. HSE Employee Assistance Programme is a National Counselling Service for staff and this has operated throughout the COVID-19 period. They provide a service to HSE community, acute hospital and National Ambulance Service staff. In recent weeks they have also responded to requests to meet staff teams/services who have been significantly impacted by the crisis.
3. HSE Occupational Health Service is available to all HSE employees and provides information, advice and medical services to monitor and protect employees from adverse health effects of work. Services provided include: the protection and immunisation of staff, pre- employment health assessments, advice on rehabilitation and return to work assessments, assessment of workplace injuries, workplace inspections. Occupational Health Service continue to provide key support and advice to staff during the Pandemic and especially staff who have tested positive for Covid-19.
4. Return to work protocol for safe work practices for staff working on HSE sites. Additional health and safety training on infection prevention and control and prevention of Covid-19 in the workplace
5. A free Stress Control programme online via www.stresscontrol.ie was made available to all staff and the general public during the Pandemic. The programme was promoted widely across the HSE, community and vol sector and private nursing home sector. Stress Control is an evidence-based programme that teaches you practical skills to deal with stress. The programme helps participants recognise the signs of stress. It covers topics including how stress affects our bodies and our thoughts. It teaches skills to overcome panicky feelings and tips to getting a good night's sleep.
6. Bereavement Support and Counselling services

The CHO1 Psychosocial Management Team developed a number of additional supports for staff. These included:

7. Mental health support messaging and advice through CHO 1 Covid 19 Staff Bulletins (twice weekly up until July 2020 and now bi weekly), staff health and wellbeing leaflet, press releases, staff email, twitter etc.
8. A dedicated telephone support line service for staff was established in late March 2020 and continues to operate.
9. Psychological First Aid sessions were delivered as requested to individuals and staff groups. To date 281 staff have availed of this support.
10. A session for Managers "Supporting Staff Wellbeing during the Pandemic" was developed and to date 210 Managers attended.
11. Supports were offered to 29 Residential Care Facilities and this was taken up in varying degrees by the staff, with some facilities and staff availing of substantial levels of support. A poster with contact details of staff support services was sent to all facilities so that staff would have access to this information.

Future Supports

Experience and evidence of the impact of emergencies and crisis situations informs us that the psychological impact begins to emerge as the physical or medical emergency passes. To that end, we understand that in the coming months and years the psychological impact of the Pandemic on staff will become more evident. We know that approximately 85 per cent of those experiencing psychological distress will recover naturally. There will however be a number of staff who will require additional supports. The HSE is continuing to plan for staff psychosocial supports via the National Psychosocial Working Group and our CHO 1 Psychosocial Working Group and Staff Health and wellbeing Governance Group.

J. Hayes, Chief Officer, CHO1

Terms of Reference for Liaison arrangements between An Garda Síochána and HSE Mental Health Services at Divisional/Approved Centre level.

1. The development of formal liaison systems between Mental Health Services and An Garda Síochána as recommended in the Report of the Joint Working Group on Mental Health Services and the Police 2009,
2. Establish a good working relationship between the Mental Health Service and An Garda Síochána in respect of collaboration on addressing the needs of persons with mental ill health,
3. Ensure the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between An Garda Síochána and the HSE on Removal to or Return of a person to an Approved Centre in accordance with section 13 and section 27, and the Removal of a person to an Approved Centre in accordance with section 12, of the 2001 Act,
4. Monitor in particular the interface between the two services in relation to the involuntary admission of persons to approved centres as provided for in sections 12, 13 and 27 of the 2001 Act and address any issues arising,
5. Identify named persons at the appropriate operational level within both services as the initial point of contact when operational issues arise,
6. Establish the operational boundaries of the respective services, and
7. Schedule meetings as appropriate to discharge the Terms of Reference.