



Office of the National Director
Organisational Change Unit

(Health Regions Programme)

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Date: 7th November 2024

TO: Deputy Róisín Shortall

Re: **PQ 45268/24**

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To ask the Minister for Health to provide a detailed update on implementation of the new HSE health regions; if the hospital groups and CHOs have been stood down; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

-Róisín Shortall (roisin.shortall@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Deputy Shortall,

In line with Sláintecare Report 2017 objectives, the implementation of HSE Health Regions involves the establishment of six regions with responsibility for the planning and coordinated delivery of health and social care services within their respective defined geographies. These arrangements aim to improve the health service's ability to deliver timely integrated care to patients and service users, care that is planned and funded in line with their needs at regional and local level.

Health Regions were established on 4 March 2024.

Implementation to date:

- The design of the Health Regions Executive Management Team (EMT) structure has been agreed and all six Regional Executive Officers (REOs) are in place since April 2024. Twenty Integrated Healthcare Areas (IHAs) have been agreed as geographic sub-components of the Health Regions, with IHA Managers taking up posts from 1st October 2024. It should be noted that a key principle for transition to Health Regions is to achieve this transformation within current resources.
- From 1st October 2024 to 3rd March 2025, interim arrangements for Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) are in place with a plan to implement agreed future state structures from 3rd March 2025.
- HGs and CHOs have been stood down from 1st October 2024. Responsibility and accountability has transferred from the CHOs and HG Senior Management Teams to the new Health Region EMT and IHA Managers. HGs and CHOs have been stood down from 1st October 2024 with the exception of the South West which, due to ongoing recruitment, will transition on 3rd March 2025. Recruitment for the appointment of outstanding Health Region EMT members continues.
- The geographic realignment of Hospital Groups (HGs) was completed at the end of February 2024. The geographic realignment of staff within former CHOs is being progressed by REOs in aligning to the new Health Regions.



- The detailed design phase of the future state Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) model is underway featuring engagements with key stakeholders, including patients and service users, internal clinical and operational representatives, and voluntary providers to progress ISD design.
- The expert group chaired by the Department of Health tasked with developing a population-based resource allocation methodology has been established and is meeting regularly.
- The implementation of the agreed Patient and Service User Engagement Model has commenced to ensure Patient & Service User Partnership approach at every level of service delivery. Patient and Service User Partnership Leads for each region have been advertised.
- A proposal on partnership arrangements with Voluntary Organisations has been approved.
- A programme of work is continuing with HSE National HR to progress the significant workforce considerations in the transition, both within HSE Centre and to the Health Regions.
- Change and Innovation Hubs are being established within each Health Region to provide the necessary expertise and change management support to the REOs in implementation of the Health Regions and ongoing innovation and change management.
- In line with the HSE Health Regions Implementation Plan, the Department of Health proposes to increase the number of Regional Health Forums from four to six to reflect the six Health Region geographies.
- Engagement on an ongoing basis with a wide range of stakeholders remains a key programme priority.
- A programme evaluation (which assesses both the process and outcomes) has commenced and is being led by the DoH. A draft evaluation protocol has been completed and is at consultation phase.

Building on work completed to date, the key next step for the implementation of Health Regions (as set out in the Health Regions Implementation Plan) is to progress and finalise detailed design of future state Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) model with stakeholders to agree substructure of IHAs (to include Clinical Governance arrangements and Networks of Care) and transition planning.

While the programme to date has focused on putting in place the necessary structures to support ISD, as the programme further progresses during 2025, there will be a continued emphasis on embracing new ways of working across multi-disciplinary teams to deliver the key objectives of patient-centred integrated care.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Liam Woods'.

Liam Woods
Director Organisational Change – Health Regions Programme.