

## **MINUTES** **MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH**

**Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2023 at 11am**  
**Venue: Council Chambers, Cork County Council, Co Cork**

### **Present:**

Clr Ann Marie Ahern\*  
Clr Audrey Buckley  
Clr Declan Burgess\*  
Clr Cathal Byrne  
Clr Peter Cleere  
Clr Pat Dunphy  
Clr Pat Fitzgerald  
Clr Michael Foley  
Clr Damien Geoghan  
Clr Pat Hayes\*  
Clr Roger Kennedy\*

Clr Donal Kenny  
Clr Garry Laffan  
Clr Mary Lenihan Foley\*  
Clr Susan McCarthy\*  
Clr Arthur McDonald  
Clr Richie Molloy  
Clr Norma Moriarty  
Clr John O'Donoghue\*  
Clr Sean O'Donovan  
Clr Michael McCarthy  
Clr John Sheehan

\* Attended online

### **Apologies:**

Clr Niall Kelleher  
Clr Ted Tynan  
Clr Mikey Sheehy  
Clr John Coonan  
Clr John McDonald

### **In Attendance:**

Dr Ger O'Callaghan, Chief Operations Officer, South/South West Hospitals Group  
Ms Gabrielle O'Keefe, Head of Health & Well-being, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare  
Ms Grace Rothwell, Chief Officer, South East Community Healthcare  
Members of the HSE South Forum Office staff

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2023

On the proposal of Cllr Gary Laffan seconded by Cllr Michael McCarthy, it was agreed that Cllr Norma Moriarty would Chair the meeting given apologies received from Cllr Mikey Sheehy Chairperson and Cllr John Coonan Vice Chairperson.

On the proposal of Cllr Pat Hayes, seconded by Cllr John Sheehan, the minutes of the Forum meeting held on Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> of March were approved and adopted by the members.

2. Chairperson's Correspondence

3. The next Committee Meetings will take place on:

- South East Committee Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2023
- South West Committee Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> of July 2023

4. Mr David Walsh made a presentation to the Forum on the proposed statutory Home Support Scheme and there followed a question and answer session from Members.

## **5. Notices of Motion**

- (a) Cllr Mary Lenihan Foley moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

"Asking the HSE for an update on the Primary Care Unit in Youghal"

A written response from Ms Tess O'Donovan, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Lenihan Foley thanked Management for this response and was pleased to note the progress made. Cllr Lenihan Foley requested to be kept updated on this development. Ms Gabrielle O'Keeffe confirmed that an update would be provided when available.

- (b) Cllr John McDonald moved the following Motion, standing his name:

"That HSE give an update on the development of a Primary Care Centres for Tullow, Co Carlow and Borris, Co. Carlow"

A written response from Ms Grace Rothwell, Chief Officer, South East Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr McDonald was not in attendance at the RHF meeting. Cllr Arthur MacDonald asked HSE Management whether Borris and Bagenalstown could be selected as potential locations for Primary Care Centres in addition to Tullow. Ms Grace Rothwell confirmed that as outlined in the written response that Borris specifically as a location has not been selected for a new Primary Care Centre. However, the neighbouring town of Graiguenamanagh has been selected. Ms Rothwell also outlined that with the development of Regional Health Authorities the HSE will be working across borders.

- (c) Cllr Michael Foley moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"To ask the HSE when will assessment clinics be re-commenced for Primary Medical Certificates applicants in Kerry?"

A written response from Ms Tess O'Donovan, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr Foley welcomed the response and the recommencement of services for primary care certificate applications. He noted that there were 25 applications awaiting completion and that the HSE Community Medical Doctors will continue to prioritise these assessments within the available resources. Cllr Foley stated that the Primary Medical Certificate issued by the HSE is critical in certifying that a person meets the criteria for the purposes of Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Regulations 1994. Cllr Foley stated that there needs to be a complete review of the Scheme nationally.

(d) Cllr Norma Moriarty moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

"That Caherciveen Day hospital be returned to a minimum five-day part week service as a matter of urgency given the number of people on a waiting list to make access to the highly thought of effective service provided there."

A written response from Ms Tess O'Donovan, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Norma Moriarty welcomed this written reply and thanked Management for same. Whilst acknowledging staff shortages and ongoing recruitment challenges, Cllr Moriarty stated that the importance of Day Hospital Services to the local population cannot be overstated. The care provided as part of this service is critically important to families. Ms Gabrielle O'Keeffe stated that services can only be provided in accordance with staffing levels and are currently at capacity. She also highlighted ongoing HSE recruitment campaigns to services for older people in this regard.

(e) Cllr Audrey Buckley moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

"Does the HSE play a role, with the pricing of prescription medications?  
The large price variation for prescription drugs and the lack of transparency from pharmacies is a problem. It may mean that some people are paying too much for their medication. Or worse, some people are not buying their medication because it costs too much. Can we or are we addressing the overpricing of some pharmacies on overpricing on prescriptions."

A written response from Shaun Flanagan, Assistant National Director, Primary Care Reimbursement Service Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Buckley thanked Management for this written reply. Cllr Buckley noted that the HSE plays no role in the pricing of private prescriptions in Community Pharmacists and that the setting of private prescription fees and / or mark-ups is a commercial matter for each Community Pharmacist.

## **6. Questions**

(a) Cllr. Declan Burgess put forward the following question:

"Update on St Patrick's Hospital Cashel and proposed 60 bed Community Nursing Unit"

A written response Ms Helen McDaid Head of Services for Older Persons, South East Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted. Cllr Burgess thanked Management for this written response. He acknowledged the recent positive meeting on

the matter with Minister Mary Butler (Minister of State for Mental Health & Older People which he attended along with Cllr Roger Kennedy Regional Health Forum Member. Cllr Burgess also noted the positive developments in Children's Disability Services in Cnoc na Ri Cashel. Cllr Burgess asked about car parking spaces and also whether the land to the rear of the Rehabilitation and Assessment Unit on site at St Patrick's Cashel had been considered by HSE Estates. Ms Rothwell in response advised that she understood there to be insufficient space at the rear of the Rehabilitation Unit. Cllr Burgess urged the HSE to consider all available options as he understood the current location under review elsewhere in Cashel has challenges and would likely not be feasible. Cllr Burgess highlighted the importance that a new Community Nursing Unit would be to the population of Cashel and the surrounding areas. He along with other local elected representatives want to see this development progressed without further delays. Cllr Roger Kennedy agreed with Cllr Burgess and also acknowledged the positive meeting with Minister Butler on this issue. Cllr Kennedy also sought clarification as to whether the licence had been recently extended by HIQA for Our Lady's (Cashel Residential Older Persons Services). Ms Rothwell confirmed same. Cllr Richie Molloy thanked his colleagues and also extended his support. Cllr Molloy highlighted the support of people who attended a local meeting. Cllr Burgess stated that he would seek further updates on site locations and viability of options on the St Patrick's Campus.

(b) Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald put forward the following question:

1. Are Carparks on the Grounds of a Public Hospital such as UHW considered by the HSE to be privately or publicly owned? 2. Should drivers with a Blue Disabled Windscreen Sticker be charged to park in a Disabled Parking Bay on Public Property? 3. As there is presently an inadequate number of Free Disabled Car Parking Spaces available at UHW, can more Disabled Parking Spaces be provided for disabled people attending outpatient appointment?"

A written response from Ben O' Sullivan, General Manager, University Hospital Waterford/Kilcreene Regional Orthopaedic Hospital Kilkenny was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr Fitzgerald acknowledged the written reply which stated that the car parks on the grounds of UHW are owned and operated by UHW with the exception of the external Glanbia carpark which is on a long term lease to facilitate staff parking. Cllr Fitzgerald sought clarification in relation to designated car parking for patients near the Dunmore Wing and whether this had previously been free of charge. Dr Ger O'Callaghan stated that he would follow up on this further and arrange for a reply to issue to Cllr Fitzgerald. Cllr Arthur MacDonald support this question and stated that more should be done to support those with mobility issues including having additional transport wheelchairs onsite and also to increase the provision of designated age friendly car parking spaces in hospitals.

(c) Cllr. Norma Moriarty put forward the following question:

"Can we be given a detailed update on physiotherapy services in the Cahersiveen and Sneem areas with specifics on waiting lists and length of time on said lists? Is it time to increase the number of therapists covering this geographic area?"

A written response from Ms Tess O'Donovan, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr. Norma Moriarty thanked Management for their reply. She noted the 3 WTE vacancies and the impact on the physiotherapy waiting list for the Caherciveen area. Whilst available physiotherapy staffing resources were redeployed to the Caherciveen area to meet service

demand, Cllr Moriarty stated that this is also an important issue for people in Sneem. Ms Gabrielle O'Keeffe in response advised members of ongoing recruitment issues for all grades of staff including Therapy Grades across the health services, locally, nationally and internationally. There are ongoing Recruitment Campaigns for this specific and other therapy disciplines. Ms O'Keeffe reiterated to Members that all vacant posts, including those in Community Health Network 3, are currently being expressed to panels formed and that Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is also running a local temporary recruitment campaign for Assistant Physiotherapists to all networks to assist with the reduction of current waiting lists.

**7. Date and Time of next meeting** – 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023 at 11am. **Venue:** Council Chambers, Cork County Hall, Co Cork.