

Third meeting of Dialogue Forum with Voluntary Organisations

Friday 28 May 2021, 11:00 – 13:00, Online

Note of Meeting

Attendees - see attached list of attendees

1. Introductory Update

Welcoming everyone, the Chair thanked all members of the Forum for their exceptional work in response to the Covid-19 pandemic over the past year and he recognised the extensive collaboration in response to the pandemic.

While Forum meetings had been postponed due to the pandemic, the Forum's work had continued, and the Chair outlined the continued work of the Forum over the past year including:

- The *Building a New relationship between Voluntary Organisations and the State in Health and Social Care Sectors* paper researched and drafted by Dr Damian Thomas (NESC).
- The Chair had held bilateral meetings including with HSE CEO, Paul Reid; HIQA; VHF and The Wheel.
- The Chair had established a Planning Group to ensure the work of the Forum progressed and this group had met frequently in recent months. The Chair thanked the members of the Planning Group on behalf of the Forum.

The Chair stated that there is now a significant opportunity and momentum to move the work of the Forum on. By setting out a work schedule for the coming months and finalising the *Building a New relationship between Voluntary Organisations and the State in Health and Social Care Sectors* paper which sets out the current context, the Forum can seize this opportunity. The Chair emphasised that for progress to be made there must be a huge level of goodwill and commitment to the Forum's work on the part of all members of the Forum.

The Chair invited a contribution on behalf of the voluntary members of the Forum and the points made included the following:

- The voluntary sector welcomes the *Building a New relationship between Voluntary Organisations and the State in Health and Social Care Sectors* paper and the *Proposed Next Steps* paper as an opportunity to take a partnership approach to working through issues.
- The paper points to positive ways of working which can benefit service users and all parties and there is now a need to retain and build on these positive practices to address key challenges.
- The voluntary sector welcomes the commitment of statutory colleagues to the partnership approach.

The Chair invited a contribution from the HSE, and the points made included the following:

- The *Building a New relationship between Voluntary Organisations and the State in Health and Social Care Sectors* paper is timely and helpful, pointing to the substantial common ground shared by organisations and the primacy of the interests of service user for everyone.

- The HSE has developed and circulated a paper in response to the NESC paper which sets out its experience over the course of the pandemic and areas of opportunity for further strengthening the relationship with voluntary organisations. The paper was developed by the senior leadership team and approved by the CEO.
- The response to the pandemic was characterised by evidence-based decision-making, responsiveness and innovation. The pandemic also once again highlighted the value and strengths of voluntary organisations.
- It is appropriate and timely to consider the balance between accountability and autonomy, but this will need to be done in the context of each organisation's obligations. Everyone recognises that this won't be easy, but it is important to start these discussions.
- The HSE is committed to seizing this opportunity and to building on what has worked well at both a Board and Executive level.

The Chair thanked members for their inputs which set the tone for the meeting.

2. Paper on *Building a New Relationship between Voluntary Organisations and the State in the Health and Social Care Sectors*

A draft paper entitled *Building a New Relationship between Voluntary Organisations and the State in the Health and Social Care Sectors* was circulated to members in advance of the meeting. Dr Damian Thomas presented an overview of the paper – see slides attached. Key points included:

- The pandemic brought a shared purpose to the efforts of all organisations and saw a collaborative national effort by statutory bodies and voluntary organisations. Throughout the past year there has been evidence of productive relationships, new ways of working, interdependency and mutual respect.
- The pandemic response was characterised by flexibility, agility and innovation and saw a move to remote service delivery and tele-medicine. There was a focus on effective, inclusive communication and the pandemic saw 'partnership in action' and a deepening of productive, collaborative relationships.
- Fostering more productive and collaborative relationships is key to implementing reform, enhancing services and delivering better outcomes for service users while strong and collaborative leadership is needed to implement new structures.
- The pandemic response has raised the issue of a new approach to funding and a desire to maintain the momentum for reform, innovation and quality, integrated services. Focus shifted to outcomes and a 'tight-loose' approach was taken.

The Chair thanked Dr Thomas and NESC for producing the paper. There followed a discussion during which the following points were made:

- Overall, Members welcomed the NESC paper and agreed it provided a positive framework for taking forward the Forum's work.
- The NPHET Vulnerable People Subgroup was a further good example of collaborative working. This Group brought Government Departments, the HSE and voluntary organisations together to protect the most vulnerable and ensure continuity of care during the pandemic – a shared common goal and focus on problem solving was key.
- Only by organisations working together can complex solutions be delivered for service users, there must be common goals and common ground. The pandemic saw organisations deliver

for the most vulnerable and there is now a need to continue and build on these relations and this trust.

- The paper should highlight the way in which some groups suffered disproportionately during the pandemic and existing structural inequalities were amplified.
- The pandemic demonstrated the importance of regulators in providing reassurance regarding the quality of services as well as their role in ensuring compliance with standards.

The Chair asked that the above contributions be reflected in the final paper. Subject to these additions, the Forum members formally accepted the paper as a context setting document for the Forum's work over the coming period. The finalised version would be circulated to members shortly and the Chair stressed the importance of Forum members sharing the paper with their own members and staff.

3. Proposed Next Steps

Introducing this item, the Department of Health stated that there is now an opportunity to move forward and an impetus to build on the momentum generated through recent collaboration. It was important to remember however that change will not happen overnight. The Department of Health briefly presented the *Proposed Next Steps* paper:

- The Forum has now accepted the *Building a New Relationship between Voluntary Organisations and the State in the Health and Social Care Sectors* paper, and it is important that this be circulated widely.
- Building on the paper, a facilitated Forum workshop will be held to enable further detailed consideration of a key theme which is emerging – how to achieve a better balance between accountability and autonomy with the aim of developing a more effective relationship to support the delivery of quality and integrated services for the benefit of service users. The workshop will consider both the overall service delivery model and the day-to-day relationship.
- Advice from Forum Members will be sought on how the Forum can best support regular dialogue on policy and reform developments, including Sláintecare, with a view to ensuring dialogue adds value and does not duplicate other engagement processes in place.
- Following progress on the above items, a sub-group of the Forum will be tasked with developing a set of partnership principles to underpin the relationship between the State and voluntary organisations.

During the discussion which followed, some of the following points were made:

- The focus now must be on moving forward rather than on the past. It was suggested that expert inputs might assist the Forum in moving forward.
- Leadership is a key element in accountability and the importance of a culture of supporting leaders and managers was highlighted. This will require new ways of working both within and between organisations.
- It was suggested that a webinar be held to publicise the *Building a New Relationship between Voluntary Organisations and the State in the Health and Social Care Sectors* paper. It is critical that those on the ground working collaboratively with local HSE partners and those working in the HSE are aware of the paper. Effective engagement at local level was a

hallmark of the Covid response and there is now an opportunity to build on and continue relationships developed over the past year.

- A number of members raised the importance of trust and the need to build and restore trust. Respect and transparency are also key. The building of a strong relationship through the work of the Forum has the potential to positively influence other processes including the HSE's Service Arrangement review and the IFMS rollout.
- Forum members feel immense empathy for the HSE which has been hit by a cyber-attack and wished to send a message of support and goodwill to colleagues in the HSE. The HSE thanked members for their comments.
- The HSE highlighted the appointment of two new HSE Board members, Anne Carrigy and Brendan Whelan.

The Chair concluded by summarising that the proposed next steps as presented had been agreed by the Forum. The Planning Group meeting in June would give further consideration to how the different work areas would be taken forward.

4. Sláintecare Implementation Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2023 – Laura Magahy, Executive Director, Sláintecare Programme Implementation Office

Laura Magahy delivered a presentation on the Sláintecare Implementation Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2023 and the Healthy Ireland Strategy 2021-25 – see slides attached. Key points included:

- Healthy Ireland is the 'prevention' pillar of Sláintecare reform and the Healthy Ireland Action Plan engages with cities, counties, schools, campuses, and clubs.
- There are two priority reform programmes for Sláintecare in 2021-2023:
 - Improving Safe, Timely Access to Care & Promoting Health & Wellbeing
 - Addressing Health Inequalities
- Under the Improving Safe, Timely Access to Care & Promoting Health & Wellbeing programme sit a number of projects including:
 - Implementation of the Health Capacity Review
 - Scaling and Mainstreaming Integration Innovation
 - Streamlining Care Pathways, from Prevention to Discharge
- These projects will be enabled through engagement with both staff and the public
- A number of projects sit under the Addressing Health Inequalities programme including:
 - Developing a Citizen Care Masterplan
 - Rolling out Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme
 - Developing Regional Health Areas

The Chair encouraged Forum members to ensure their member organisations were informed about Sláintecare's progress to date and plans for 2021-2023. During the discussion which followed, points made included the following:

- Voluntary organisations were encouraged to consider the many, inter-related Sláintecare workstreams to look for opportunities to contribute and get involved.
- There are significant opportunities for organisations to get involved in the *Healthy Communities Programme*, which will take a cross Government approach, and which will consider the wider determinants of health, working with the communities involved.

5. AOB and Proposed dates of upcoming Forum meetings

The next meeting will take place on Friday 25 June and the next Planning Group meeting will take place on Friday 11 June.

Actions:

Action	Who	When
<i>Building a New Relationship between Voluntary Organisations and the State in the Health and Social Care Sectors</i> paper to be finalised	Dr Damian Thomas	ASAP
Finalised paper to be circulated to members	Secretariat	Next week
Finalised paper to be circulated by Members to their membership	All Forum members	Next week
Secretariat will share workshop outline with Planning Group at meeting on 11 June	Secretariat	11 June
Secretariat will share workshop details with Forum members	Secretariat	Following 11 June Planning Group meeting