

Meeting of Dialogue Forum with Voluntary Organisations

Monday 12 September, 14:00-16:00, Miesian Plaza

Note of Meeting

1. Introductory Update – Chair Peter Cassells

In his opening remarks, the Chair welcomed Forum members and those alternating for Forum members. The Chair also welcomed a number of Department of Health and HSE colleagues from the RHA Implementation Team. The Chair briefly reflected on the momentum that has now developed within the Forum given the various workstreams that are underway, aided by the return of in-person meetings.

2. Update and Engagement on Regional Health Areas

The DoH delivered a presentation updating members of the Forum on Regional Health Areas. Key points included:

- A reminder of the background to RHAs and the commitment to establish RHAs as outlined in the Oireachtas Sláintecare Report 2017 which was reaffirmed in the 2018 Sláintecare Implementation Strategy and the Sláintecare Action Plans which have followed.
- Following a Government Decision which approved the boundaries of six new RHAs in 2019, a further Government Decision to progress with RHAs and to develop a model for implementation was approved in April 2022.
- The core objectives of RHA implementation are to:
 - enable the integration of care
 - enable a population-based approach to service planning and delivery
 - strengthen clinical and corporate governance and accountability at all levels
 - balance national consistency with increased local autonomy and decision-making
- Expected benefits of Regional Health Areas include:
 - improved continuum of care between community-based and hospital-based services to deliver care aligned with patient and service user needs
 - greater continuity of care for patients and their families as they transition through services
 - consistent quality and standards of clinical care within and across regions
 - clear pathways of care that are easy to navigate and as close to home as possible
 - enabling local needs to inform innovation and decision-making
 - more collaborative working across local networks of statutory and voluntary organisations, agencies, and authorities given the interdependence at the heart of our health and social care system
- RHAs will be set up as formal regional structures within the HSE with funding provided to each RHA via estimates based on a population-based resource allocation. It is intended that each RHA will have appropriate autonomy in deciding how that budget will be spent in line with the services that they plan to provide for their defined populations.
- A number of enabling workstreams are progressing with a view to a detailed implementation plan being finalised by year end. A continuum of engagements is taking place to inform this work. The transition to RHAs will then take place in 2023 and it is expected that they will be operational by Q1 2024.

The Chair welcomed the update provided by the DoH and breakout discussions followed to gather Forum members' views on how the State and voluntary sector could best collaborate to ensure the successful implementation of Regional Health Areas. Discussions focused on the following questions:

- What examples of integration across acute, community, and/or primary care services is your organisation already involved in? What can we learn from voluntary organisations' successful integrated care initiatives and current governance structures?
- What will help or hinder the new RHAs? Who should we talk to/get involved in this phase/future phases of RHA design and implementation?
- Recognising the interdependence between health and social care actors in the system, how can we best share lessons learned, information, and best practice within and across RHAs and the wider national services?

An output pack (attached) summarises the points made in these breakout discussions.

The Chair thanked members for their detailed contributions to the breakout discussions and encouraged Forum members to engage with those they represent regarding the implementation of RHAs. There followed a brief discussion during which the following points were made:

- The importance of broad regional engagement was highlighted both during the design and planning phase of RHAs and once they become operational. Further consideration should be given to how RHAs will in future engage with those they are serving.
- An important aim of RHAs is improved service delivery and in this context voluntary organisations have an important role to play. The RHA focus on integrating care requires a high level of collaboration between the RHAs and voluntary organisations.

3. Update on ongoing Forum Work

Partnership Principles

The DoH presented an overview to Forum members on a proposed event to launch the agreed partnership principles. Key points included:

- We now have an agreed set of principles to improve the relationship between the State and voluntary organisations in a partnership way
- In parallel to processes within each Forum member to disseminate the principles and discuss how they can be embedded, it is proposed that the Forum would hold a launch event.
- The objectives of the event are to:
 - ensure awareness of the agreed principles that we have all agreed to
 - display commitment to using the principles to improve our relationship
 - share case study examples of the agreed principles working in practice
 - provide a platform for senior leaders across both the statutory and voluntary sectors to recognise the interdependency across both sectors and the value of an effective mutually respectful relationship and their commitment to embedding principles
- It is intended that the launch will take place in person and will be attended by senior leadership representatives across the State and voluntary sector. The secretariat welcomes suggestions concerning venues for the event.

The Chair thanked the DoH for their input and stressed the importance of the event being "owned" by all Forum members to demonstrate that all members are signed up to the partnership principles

and are committed to the principles improving the relationship in future. Forum members welcomed the proposal. The DoH will now work with Forum members to organise the launch event.

SA Review

The HSE provided an update to the members of the Forum on the review of the Service Arrangement and the points made included the following:

- The review of the Service Arrangement is a standing item on the agenda at the meetings of the HSE's National Operations Team.
- A HSE Working Group is being established to manage the review of the Service Arrangement with representation from across the HSE and the first meeting of the Group is due to take place shortly.
- Terms of reference to direct the nature of the review of the Service Arrangement are currently being drafted and these will be informed by the Partnership Principles.
- Engagement with the voluntary sector will be an important aspect of the process and the HSE will engage with the sector on the timelines and shape of this engagement.
- The review of the Service Arrangement will also be informed by the case study process.

The Chair thanked the HSE for the update provided. The Chair noted the inherent connection between the case study process, the work on the partnership principles and the Service Arrangement review. There is also a link with RHA implementation and at all times our focus must be on creating a real partnership for the benefit of service users. A discussion followed during which the following points were made:

- Engagement with the voluntary sector on the review of the Service Arrangement will ensure the credibility of the process.
- There is an expectation that the agreed partnership principles will be embedded in the Service Arrangement review process.

The Chair thanked members for their contributions, noting the significance of engaging with the voluntary sector concerning the review of the Service Arrangement and the importance of embedding the agreed principles in the review process. Forum members can expect to receive an update on progress in this regard at the November meeting of the Forum.

Case studies

The Chair invited the DoH to update the members of the Forum on the case study process. Key updates included:

- The Oversight Group met in July to progress the identification of case study participant organisations and to work with Prospectus on the detailed design of the process.
- The work undertaken by members of the Forum over the summer to identify participant organisations was recognised.
- It was also acknowledged that there is understandable uneasiness in some parts of the sector regarding engagement in the process and Prospectus has taken this into account in designing the process. Prospectus will hold stand alone meetings with participants, ahead of the case study workshop with HSE colleagues, to help organisations feel as comfortable and confident as possible. Revised timelines, process and the list of participants to be involved in the case study process will be approved at the next meeting of the Oversight Group which will take place this week.

- It is planned that the case study workshops will take place in October and November, with the aim of producing draft outputs from the process by the end of the year.

The Chair thanked the DoH for the update and welcomed the contributions of Forum members to the Oversight Group. The Chair remarked that considerable progress has been made in this area and highlighted the importance of the case studies in helping to get into the detail of issues which are arising. An update can be provided to members ahead of the next full Forum meeting in November.

4. Close

The Chair brought the meeting to a close, thanking members and presenters for their inputs and engagement. The Chair also thanked members for their ongoing commitment to the work of the Forum. The Chair highlighted the importance of progressing the various workstreams underway over the coming period given the overlap between the workstreams.