

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WESTERN LOCAL COMMISSIONING GROUP  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL 2022 AT 2.00PM  
VIA ZOOM**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr Josephine Deehan, Chair/Local Government Representative  
Mr Hugh Casey, General Dental Practitioner Representative  
Mrs Mary T Conway, Community and Voluntary Representative  
Mr Donall Henderson, Community and Voluntary Representative  
Cllr John McClaghry, Local Government Representative  
Dr Paul Molloy, General Medical Practitioner Representative  
Dr Jacintha O’Kane, General Medical Practitioner Representative  
Cllr Victor Warrington, Local Government Representative

**APOLOGIES:**

Mrs Siobhan Donald, Nursing Representative, PHA  
Dr Mo Henderson, AHP Representative, PHA  
Mrs Fiona Teague, Health and Wellbeing Improvement Manager, PHA

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Brian McAleer, Assistant Director of Commissioning/Commissioning Lead, SPPG  
Ms Sally Kelly, Senior Communications Manager, SPPG  
Miss Hayley Thomas, Corporate Business Officer, SPPG

**14/22 CHAIRS REMARKS**

Cllr Deehan welcomed Members to the June meeting.

**15/22 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mrs Siobhan Donald, Dr Mo Henderson and Mrs Fiona Teague.

**16/22 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Chair took Members through the minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 13 April 2022. The minutes were agreed on the proposal of Mr Casey.

## **17/22 REFORM OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

Mr McAleer advised a colleague from the Department of Health scheduled to present on the Reform of Adult Social Care and consultation was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting. Mr McAleer talked Members through the presentation.

Commencing the presentation, he explained that the Department of Health (DoH) launched a public consultation on the Reform of Adult Social Care on 26 January 2022. The Consultation, which was initially to run until 1 June 2022 has been extended until 1 July 2022.

Continuing, he said the Consultation is the DoH response to 16 proposals set out to reboot adult care in Northern Ireland in the Power to People Report, published in December 2017. The Report he said is set against the context of an ageing population and increasing demands on the system and services as a result, while investment has failed to keep pace.

Mr McAleer explained that the Consultation is split into six strategic priorities, as outlined below with 48 proposals to deliver real change. He talked Members through each of the priorities and associated proposals.

- Priority 1 – Sustainable System Building
- Priority 2 – A valued workforce
- Priority 3 – Individual Choice and Control
- Priority 4 – Prevention and Early Intervention
- Priority 5 – Supporting Carers
- Priority 6 – Primacy of Home

In terms of next steps, Mr McAleer advised a Consultation Feedback Report which will inform the development of a new strategy for social care will be presented to the incoming Minister and subsequently published.

Estimated costings and an economic impact assessment for the proposed actions are being developed concurrent to the consultation period and a review of future charging arrangements, to include any proposed changes to cap and floor thresholds will be conducted.

The link to the Consultation was shared with Members for those who may be interested in responding.

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-reform-adult-social-carehaveyoursayni.co.uk>

The Chair thanked Mr McAleer for providing an overview of the Consultation adding that the reform of adult social care is something that concerns everyone either personally looking to the future or in relation to family members. She stressed the importance of contributing to the consultation and encouraged Members to respond.

## 18/22 COMMISSIONING LEAD UPDATE

Commencing his update, Mr McAleer advised that going forward there will be a renewed focus on Unscheduled Care and as a result he is now required to focus full time on Unscheduled Care while retaining the NIAS and Trauma Network portfolio. He added that other areas of work he has been involved in, which includes the LCG will be taken over by other colleagues.

The Chair said she wished to publically thank Mr McAleer for his commitment to the work of the Western Local Commissioning Group and the support shown to her in her role as Interim Chair of the Group and the Group in general. She went on to wish him well in his future position.

Continuing his update, Mr McAleer apprised Members of the work carried out in terms of Delivery Plans stating that for many years the Department of Health (DoH) would set out priorities, a Commissioning Plan would then be developed by the former HSCB, now SPPG and the Trusts would respond with their Delivery Plans. However, during the Pandemic it proved difficult to plan for more than a couple months ahead which saw a move away from annual plans. Trusts are currently working towards one delivery plan for the period June 2022 – March 2023 to include a winter plan which will detail how services will be delivered for the remainder of the year with a focus on rebuild. In addition, the new Permanent Secretary has stated that by September 2022 he would expect to see Trusts back to pre Pandemic levels of activity. Mr McAleer went on to say that in some specialities the Trusts are already at pre Pandemic levels and in these instances will be pushed to achieve their commissioned levels.

In addition, there will be strict performance management measures in place via monthly meetings to monitor levels while moving away from COVID and tackling waiting lists across all services.

In relation to the Unscheduled Care Management Unit Mr McAleer explained that the Unit was set up in 2021. A dedicated Team has now been established and will sit within the Directorate with responsibility for Performance and Elective Care. This will be very much a Multi-Disciplinary Team with input from Social work, AHP, Primary Care and Secondary Care clinician etc.

A Trust Director will be directly involved and the Unit will span the entire Unscheduled Care spectrum with the intention of establishing a single identity for Unscheduled Care in addition to creating a central control function to enable all parties to be kept up to date on what is occurring across the system in terms of discharges, Emergency Department attendances etc.

The work will be very much data driven to inform conversations with the Trusts in regard to performance management and service improvement.

In relation to the 2022/23 Budget position, Mr McAleer advised the Budget for 2022/23 has yet to be confirmed, adding, the outlook, despite anticipating significant allocations is extremely challenging. However, there will be additional allocations as a result of the National Insurance increase. He went on to apprise Members that the Finance Minister has notified Departments not to make decisions to cease services where there is a reasonable expectation funding could be received later in the year. This approach has been agreed with the Health Minister to enable opening allocations to proceed and fund activity at current levels, whilst controlling spend in line with Finance Ministers advice.

Mr McAleer advised there will be a focus on the Ministerial priorities for 2022/23 which included, Elective Services, Cancer Services, Mental Health, No More Silos (NMS) and Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) to increase activity and capacity in these areas. Furthermore, the SPPG will continually observe the Trusts spending to ensure it aligns with the Ministers priorities, adding that Trusts are not permitted to spend non-recurrently in the 2022/23 year on recurrent services unless a funding source has been agreed or prior approval sought from DoH.

The opening allocation for the Health Service for 2022/23 is £6.3bn, £6.1bn recurrent and £0.2bn non-recurrent funding. A non-recurrent allocation will be available in quarter 1 (March – June 2022) for COVID as Trusts are still incurring costs as a result of COVID. The position will be reviewed for Quarter 2 and beyond based on further surges.

A Financial Planning process is underway and the SPPG will review the Trusts Plans and provide feedback taking slippage and pressures on the system into consideration.

Moving onto local issues, Mr McAleer said Members may be aware of an announcement by the Minister regarding funding available to increase elective care across the Region. Lagan Valley Hospital, he reminded the Group was the first Elective Care Hub for Northern Ireland with Omagh now announced as the second Hub. Initial investment will facilitate 7 additional day case sessions (4 urology, 3 general surgery) and 10 additional scope sessions per week. He spoke of how encouraging it is to see the facility being utilised to help waiting lists across the Region. In addition, there will be a particular focus on performance management to ensure the sessions currently running in Omagh are running as efficiently as possible.

Recapping on the Surgical Review in South West Acute Hospital (SWAH), he advised the Review continues and is an internal Western HSC Trust

review. The aim of the Review is to ensure that services within SWAH are robust and sustainable.

Mr McAleer informed Members that as of 7 June 2022, Monkeypox is a notifiable disease and all health practitioners are required to share information with the PHA if they become aware or have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a person they have come into contact with has Monkeypox. Numbers in Northern Ireland are currently low with one confirmed case and one probable case, however, the implications for the Health Service could be significant if an outbreak was to occur as the isolation period for contact with a confirmed case is 21 days.

Concluding his update, Mr McAleer referred to COVID Testing and the significant changes to testing covered by the media and the move away from PCR testing to Lateral Flow Testing. He advised that regionally COVID patients have reduced with 147 patients currently being treated. Locally there are 44 patients being treated for COVID; 14 Altnagelvin, 30 SWAH.

The Chair thanked Mr McAleer for his update and commented on the challenging issues within the update and also the good news in respect of COVID numbers declining.

#### **19/22 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members thanked Mr McAleer for his contribution to the LCG and wished him well in his new role. As Members had no other business to discuss, the Chair thanked Members for their attendance and closed the meeting.

#### **20/22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Western Local Commissioning Group will be held on Wednesday 10 August 2022 via Zoom.