# Minutes of a Public Meeting of the Western Local Commissioning Group held on Wednesday 25th January 2023 at 2pm via Zoom video link

**PRESENT:**
Cllr Josephine Deehan, Local Government Representative/Chair
Ms Catherine Cassidy, Deputy Director for Social Care and Children, SPPG
Mrs Mary T Conway, Community and Voluntary Representative
Dr Paul Molloy, General Medical Practitioner Representative
Mr Dessie Lowry, Nursing Representative, PHA
Cllr Victor Warrington, Local Government Representative

**APOLOGIES:**
Mrs Siobhan Donald, Nursing Representative, PHA
Cllr John McClaughry, Local Government Representative
Mr Donall Henderson, Community and Voluntary Representative
Dr Dearbhla McManus, General Medical Practitioner Representative
Mrs Fiona Teague, Health and Wellbeing Improvement Manager, PHA
Mrs Charlene Shongo, Interim Corporate Business Lead, SPPG

**IN ATTENDANCE:**
Mr Paul Turley, Assistant Director of Commissioning/Commissioning Lead, SPPG
Ms Sally Kelly, Communications Manager, SPPG
Ms Hayley Thomas, Corporate Business Officer, SPPG

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| **01/23** | **CHAIR'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS:**<br><br>The Chair welcomed Members to the first meeting of 2023. | |
| **02/23** | **APOLOGIES**<br><br>Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Siobhan Donald, Mrs Fiona Teague, Cllr John McClaughry, Dr Dearbhla McManus, Mr Donall Henderson and Mrs Charlene Shongo. | |
| **03/23** | **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**<br><br>The minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 30th November 2022 were agreed on the proposal of Dr Molloy. | |
| **04/23** | **COMMISSIONING LEAD UPDATE**<br><br>**Declarations and Conflicts of Interest**<br>Members confirmed they had no conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda for today's meeting. | |

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| | **Correspondence**<br>Commencing, Mr Turley noted correspondence received from the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Sir Michael McBride and Maria McIlgorm, Chief Nursing Officer acknowledging the work of professional staff in the past year, emerging from the Pandemic and also in looking forward and recognising the significant challenges that the Health and Social Care system is facing, particularly over the winter period. He added that it is both important and appropriate that the professional leads within the system reflect the good work that is taking place in very challenging times.<br><br>A similar communication issued from the Permanent Secretary, Mr Peter May, as a press release on the 18th January 2023 acknowledged the winter period ahead and paid tribute to the intensive efforts of staff right across the Health and Social Care system. Also noted, was the challenges encountered by Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland which is mirrored across the UK and Southern Ireland. In addition, the Permanent Secretary has underlined the opportunity to plan and map a way out of this process over a period of time and highlighted a number of areas which will be subject to consideration and support, both financially and in terms of resource, such as the importance of increasing capacity within domiciliary care and wider social care capacity to meet increasing levels of need. A focus on community based care to support communities to help individuals live healthier was reiterated alongside continued support to enhance the GP system. Opportunities to rebuild and reconfigure the services was also emphasised. However, it was pointed out that to work effectively the system will require additional investment and political leadership.<br><br>In relation to investments, Mr Turley said Members would be aware of the high profile area of abortion services recently legislated for in NI in the absence of an Executive and of the investment to be received by all Trusts to secure abortion services. Project Oversight arrangements will be put in place given the challenges with implementing this service.<br><br>Additionally, the Western Trust will receive significant investment in Endoscopic services to provide additional capacity to secure extra scope sessions and approximately 2,000 pre-assessment appointments. It will be incumbent on the Trust to put this capacity in place with follow up to ensure capacity is delivered in terms of the Service Delivery Plans. SPPG will look to see enhancements in terms of waiting times for these services.<br><br>Referring to the financial position as the 2022/23 financial year comes to an end and the planning position as we move to the 2023/24 financial year, Mr Turley said that due to the bleak budgetary position a number of scenarios need to be planned for. Services may need to be reconfigured if the funds are not available, in particular for those services which have not been formally commissioned or those that have had to respond to significant demand within the system. Planning assumptions are currently being taken forward by the Finance Directorate in conjunction with Trust counterparts.<br><br>Mr Turley suggested revisiting this this topic as we move into the 2023/24 financial year. | |

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| | Mr Turley advised the Group of correspondence received from Ms Martina Moore, Programme Director, ICS NI and Mr Paul Cavanagh, Director of Commissioning, SPPG, which outlined the opportunity to put test arrangements in place for the Integrated Care System (ICS) for Northern Ireland and advising of an Implementation Plan which will see ICSs in place, in full by April 2024, however, this will be subject to legislation. The letter sets out that from 1 April 2023, pilot sites will be put in place and has suggested that one Trust will take the lead, which will be the Southern Trust area with the prospect of the pilot sites being rolled out next year to the other localities. It is the intention to move forward with pilot arrangements in the next financial year.<br><br>In addition, a letter has been issued informing that Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs) will be stood down as at 31 March 2023. There are plans for a regional ICP event to mark the occasion to be organised for February 2023. Mr Turley undertook to share details with Members when available.<br><br>Furthermore, he noted that this may be an opportunity for those LCGs with vacancies in membership to address these gaps. Mr Turley undertook to take this up with the appropriate Directors.<br><br>The Chair thanked Mr Turley adding that the work of the ICPs is highly valued with a lot of experience and enthusiasm within the Group and if we can utilise this to the benefit of the LCGs, this is something which should be pursued.<br><br>**<u>Engagements</u>**<br><br>• The Chair apprised Members of a Special Council Meeting she attended on 7th January 2023 which was addressed by WHSCT Chief Executive, Mr Neill Guckian and Senior Members of his team to explain the reasons for the temporary suspension of Emergency General Surgery at South West Acute Hospital (SWAH) and inform of the Public Consultation which opened on 17th January 2023 and would run for a period of 12 weeks until 10th April 2023. Seven face to face public engagements will be held throughout Fermanagh and Tyrone with two additional online events. Points of concern which were noted related to difficulties in recruiting consultants to the SWAH with their most recent recruitment drive not being successful and clinical interdependencies which will prove to be a major hurdle in overcoming the barriers to the delivery of Acute Surgery.<br>The consultation document she added, asks respondents to comment on potential ways to overcome these barriers and she encouraged Members to participate in the consultation process. | **Mr Turley** |

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| **05/23** | **Matters Arising**<br><br>Mr Turley took Members through the Matters Arising from the previous minutes, a copy of which had been shared with Members prior to the meeting and included:-<br>• Presentation shared with Members on Advanced Care Planning.<br>• Links to various Seminars shared with Members regarding the Needs Assessment on Substance Misuse which is being taken forward by Figure 8 Consultancy Services.<br>• Update on ICS shared under correspondence<br>• General Practice update received from Mr Pat Brolly prior to meeting, and will be shared with Members.<br><br>In relation point 2, Needs Assessment on Substance Misuse, Mr Lowry advised that Figure 8 are now moving to the second phase of the needs assessment which involves family engagement and a loved ones survey which will then move towards a staff survey as part of the process. Individuals who have attended the meetings have been contacted in relation to element.<br><br>The Chair thanked Mr Lowry for his update and reiterated the importance of this area and how substance misuse is a significant factor in mental health difficulties. | |
| **06/23** | **REPORT BY COMMISSIONING LEAD**<br><br>• **Consultation on Temporary Suspension of Emergency General Surgery Services – SWAH**<br><br>Commencing, Mr Turley said that as already indicated by the Chair, the Consultation documentation which was published the previous week, will run until 10th April 2023. Mr Turley talked Members through the structure of the documentation, adding that the publication is very well laid out in terms of presentation and will be easy to understand and engage with and it is hoped the public will respond to this important review.<br><br>In addition, Mr Turley outlined how the Trust will reduce the risk to patients during this temporary suspension in terms of the pathways put in place. This includes; additional ambulance capacity via private ambulance provider during key times to ensure capacity is not diminished by having to travel further distances to take patients to Altnagelvin, Craigavon and Sligo Regional and increased capacity at Altnagelvin Area Hospital to cope with additional numbers for General Surgery.<br><br>Also highlighted is the Report by Professor Mark Taylor on General Surgery Standards published in June 2021 in relation to the provision of high quality General Surgery services. | |

The circumstances which the Trust would seek to reinstate Emergency General Surgery services is also set out and monitoring the impact of these changes.

Mr Turley advised he is involved in developing a format to manage activity reports and confirmed that he would be content to take Members through this when available.

In addition to these arrangements the Consultation paper also highlights that the Trust have moved ahead with the establishment of the Elective Overnight Stay Centre at SWAH and this service has commenced with a view to building upon.

At the end of the Consultation process, the Trust will bring forward a Consultation Report and seek the Trust Board's approval. In the absence of Minister, it will be for the Permanent Secretary to make a decision on the final outcome and this will be based on public safety.

Ms Kelly agreed to share the documentation circulated to SPPG Communications from WHSCT with the Group.

The Chair thanked Mr Turley for his briefing and invited comments from Members. During discussion the following points were noted:-

- Councillor Warrington stated his concerns that this temporary measure may become a permanent measure. In addition, the Hospital which is an excellent facility has not been utilised to its full potential since opening.

  The Chair thanked Cllr Warrington for his views and incapsulating the mood in the Fermanagh/Omagh area, adding it is very important to express these views and have them reflected in the Consultation process.

- Mr Lowry asked if a Consultation response will be compiled on behalf of the WLCG?

  In response Mr Turley advised that the WLCG as a Committee of the SPPG will be precluded from responding as our role will be to assess the recommendations which come forward from the Trust, however Members as individuals can respond and are encouraged to do so.

  In relation to Cllr Warrington's concerns on the temporary nature of the suspension, Mr Turley advised that if the issues which brought about these changes ie. staff rotas and the standards set out in Professor Taylor's Report can be resolved then the SPPG as the commissioner will be asking the Trust to look at opportunity to reinstate the service.

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| | It was also noted that the Southern HSC Trust have also embarked on a similar public consultation associated with the permanent closure of the Emergency General Surgery service at Daisy Hill Hospital in Newry.<br><br>Mr Turley advised that he is in regular contact with Western Trust and will hopefully have report back to this forum in coming weeks. | |
| **07/23** | **<u>WESTERN TRUST PERFORMANCE</u>**<br><br>Referring to the Western Trust Performance Report for month 5, Mr Turley reported that the Western Trust is working hard to attain pre pandemic activity, the benchmark for which is the outturn activity for 2019/20. A number of areas remain challenging such as AHP services, Social Care, particularly day care provision and elective services. Mr Turley advised he has asked for more detail on the areas impacted such as general surgery, dermatology and oral dentistry and noted that most of the issues/challenges relate to staff vacancies.<br><br>Challenges in third quarter report as Trust contends with industrial action with further action planned which will also impact the final quarter return.<br><br>The Chair thanked Mr Turley for his update adding the challenges for the Trust are very substantial and while mindful the Trust are working extremely hard, there is a significant amount of work still to be done. She also noted comments regarding industrial action and staffing shortfalls.<br><br>Touching on Domiciliary Care Services, Mr Turley said this is a significant issue in the Western Trust particularly in relation to SWAH and the Performance Reports. Referring to a snapshot report published each year on Domiciliary Care Services for Adults in NI which was published on 24th January 2023, Mr Turley highlighted 296,000 contracted domiciliary hours are provided by Trusts across NI which has reduced by 1% since the same time last year, 28% of domiciliary care hours are provided by statutory services, while 72% are provided by the independent sector. In terms of the average hours that an individual client received is around 13.1hours which sees a reduction of 0.1 hours since 2021. The number of clients in receipt of domiciliary care services this year was 22,500 which is slightly down from 22,700 in 2021 and the number of visits conducted was in the region of 500,000.<br><br>This document, he said, is a good indication of population profile and agreed to share with Members.<br><br>The Chair stated that it is important the new model of service delivery is right and fit for purpose and reflects the needs of individual localities. | **Mr Turley** |

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| **07/23** | **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**<br><br>The Chair thanked Members for their attendance and input and as there was no further business closed the meeting. | |
| **08/23** | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**<br><br>The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 22nd February 2023 via zoom. | |