

**PHA AND DOH EXTRAORDINARY SPONSORSHIP MEETING
TUESDAY 30 MARCH 2021
16.30 VIA ZOOM**

DoH	PHA
Dr Michael McBride, CMO	Olive MacLeod
Dr Lourda Geoghegan, DCMO	Dr Stephen Bergin
Name Redacted	Dr Liz Mitchell
	Rodney Morton
	Stephen Wilson
	Name Redacted
Apologies	
Dr Aideen Keaney	

1. Chair Introduction/Welcome

Dr McBride welcomed everyone to the 12th meeting. He apologised for not being able to attend the last meeting held and for the cancellation of the subsequent meeting on the 16th March 2021.

2. Note of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 2nd March 2021 were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

Action Point 1: PHA to write to DoH outlining any concerns in relation to AAA screening

Paper from Dr Stephen Bergin detailing issues arising in the AAA screening programme was received on 30 March 2021 and discussed later in the agenda.

4. COVID-19 Response

I. Contact Tracing Service

Dr McBride stated that this was covered in the meeting earlier that day about Contact Tracing. He asked if there was anything additional that needed raised. Ms MacLeod agreed to write to the CMO regarding testing of close contacts in schools. Dr Geoghegan advised that it was not possible to commence immediate testing of close contact in schools and they are closed from later this week. She suggested that testing should commence on 12 April when schools return, as originally agreed. Dr McBride agreed with that approach. He asked was there any specific communications required in relation to contact tracing. Mr Wilson said no it had been covered earlier although there may be a need to revisit some

of the previous campaign work in relation to Digital Self Trace in the new financial year.

II. General Covid-19 issues including Capacity and Capability

Ms MacLeod advised there was nothing which needed escalated at this meeting.

5. Wider PHA Functions

I. Impact on other PHA functions – reporting by exception

Ms MacLeod and Dr Bergin advised there were no further impacts to report at this stage. Dr McBride asked that the list of normal business being maintained continues to be reviewed regularly while PHA remained in business continuity mode.

II. PHA Hussey review

Dr McBride advised that the Minister has approved a paper in relation to the Hussey review, focusing on the recommendations and implications for the current COVID-19 response, COVID recovery and long-term resilience phases.

The report, along with the announcement of the UK Health Security Agency on 24 March - which will have consequences for the health protection functions across the 4 UK nations – in the first instance by taking on functions currently provided on a UK basis by PHE, NHS Test and Trace and other reserved functions. Additionally, the Health and Social Care Bill, due to take effect from April 2022 and currently before the Assembly, provides for the most significant reform of the health system in Northern Ireland since the previous 2009.

Dr McBride said that this is an opportunity to ensure that additional strategic and operational benefit from these new national arrangements and capabilities are maximised as they develop, while ensuring alignment and complementarity with NI public health and health protection capacity and capability requirements.

He reported that Minister agreed that comprehensive programme management arrangements should be put in place to oversee the reform and transition of the PHA to a new vision and operating model that will improve public health into the future. The programme board will be coproduced and jointly operated with the PHA and will report via CMO and the Permanent Secretary to the Minister.

Dr McBride said he understood that some work must start immediately, especially implementation of recommendations regarding the ongoing COVID-19 response. He advised that the Permanent Secretary would formally write to the PHA Chair and Chief Executive to notify them of Ministers decision, the background and nature of the restructuring

required and to seek nominations to work with the Department to develop the programme board and establish a joint secretariat.

New Action Point 1: Permanent Secretary to write to the PHA regarding the establishment of a programme board.

Ms MacLeod replied that this was helpful as the Board were keen to move forward on the review and that, while planning work on a new 3 year corporate plan had started, this work would not be wasted. Dr McBride stated that, to populate workstreams, SRO leads need to be nominated at both policy and operational levels. Mr Morton agreed that the next steps are encouraging and will help to modernise the PHA and build on work which has already started.

III. Restoration of Screening

Dr McBride thanked the PHA for the paper on general screening, he advised that the contents had been noted. Dr Bergin advised of an issue with the AAA screening programme in relation to pressure on theatres and intensive care, he advised that a recovery plan has been put in place. Dr McBride asked that DoH policy leads in Secondary Care are advised to ensure this issue is included in Trust Rebuild and Recovery plans and to ensure that Minister is sighted on the issue. Dr Bergin advised that screening had been elevated to the top of the risk register in the PHA.

New Action Point 2: Sponsor Branch to advise Director of Secondary Care of the position regarding AAA population screening and access to theatre and surgical lists

6. AOB

Ms MacLeod asked if the report on perinatal deaths, due tomorrow, could be granted an extension. Dr McBride agreed an extension of two weeks due to the forthcoming Easter holidays.

Mr Morton reported that assurances had been sought regarding clusters in BHSCT and confirmed that PHA remain sighted and linked in with Director of Secondary Care.

Dr Geoghegan raised the issue of Local Government meetings that have emanated from NIPEG, and stated that the Department wouldn't be engaging at this stage. The PHA would need to consider the added value of these meeting, and ensure that local government are aware of all the information sharing currently underway.

7. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 13 April 2021 from 16.30-17.00 and fortnightly thereafter, as required.