

Note of first meeting of the High-Level Taskforce (HLTF) Implementation Steering Committee

6 December 2022 – Department of Health, Miesian Plaza

Attendance:

Department of Health

Siobhan McArdle, Siobhan Hargis, Michael Murchan, Brendan Tuohy, Dr. Philip Dodd.

Department of Justice

Ben Ryan, Mary O' Regan, Oonagh Ffrench

Purpose of the meeting

This was the first meeting of the High-Level Taskforce (HLTF) Implementation Steering Committee. The main purpose was to consider how best to progress implementation of the HTLF report over future years, including timeframes envisaged for the recommendations of the report.

1. Review following recent launch of HLTF report and relocation of HSE National Forensic Mental Health Service to Portrane.

It was noted that there was a generally positive reaction to the publication of HLTF report on 30 September last.

The opening of the new HSE National Forensic Mental Health Service facility at Portrane on 4 November last was a significant and welcome achievement, particularly in terms of its service potential regarding many aspects of the HTLF report.

Action: The Department of Health agreed to ask the HSE to furnish the Department of Justice with an update in relation to admission rates to the new facility.

2. Implementation Plan for Departments/agencies (including milestones, other recent reports etc).

The group discussed how the function of the Committee is to drive the implementation of the report's recommendations. The report assigns ownership for each of the recommendations alongside expected delivery time frames ranging from the short-term (within the next 18 months), medium term (within the next 3 years) or long term (within the next 5 years).

Detailed discussion took place around the HLTF recommendations, with a particular focus on the short-term HTLF recommendations relating to the health sector or those recommendations involving a joint sectoral approach. It was identified that further work would be required by Mental Health Unit to refine this in terms of aligning the recommendations of Sharing the Vision (StV) or linking to other relevant health structures or health policies.

The group discussed how the work of the Forensic/Justice Workstream can be progressed. Consideration was given to including appropriate high-level representation by relevant Justice agencies (such as the IPS, AGS, etc) as needed.

The group highlighted how a key issue will be to identify any potential "gaps" where HLTF recommendations do not fall within extant policy recommendations/policy implementation plans.

There was discussion on thematic inter-dependencies within the HTLF report and how recommendations could be grouped not just based on delivery timeframe, but according to those inter-dependencies such as delivery of legislative change, training needs, etc.

Items under point 1 were reviewed in terms of agreeing Short/Medium/Long Term timeframes, or a combination of these. Some of these items required a change to the HTLF report timeframes e.g. Recommendation 1.1. concerning the Adult Caution Scheme should change from short to medium term category. Also changed were 1.2, 1.3, 1.4. Items under point 2 are primarily addressed on the health side by the STV Forensic Workstream, including clarifying timeframes for 2023. The items under Point 3 were identified as mainly collaborative ones, and timeframes also discussed. The timeframes for all recommendations are subject to further detailed review.

Action: HSE to furnish to AGS details of relevant Service Level Agreements with NGO partners.

Action: It was agreed that a key contact person for HTLF should be agreed between the HSE and Justice agencies such as IPS, AGS etc. These leads would have primary responsibility to deal with and co-ordinate HTLF recommendations at agency level and could attend Steering Committee meetings as required.

Action: Both Departments, in conjunction with relevant agencies, will review in detail respective roles, responsibilities and structures to progress joint recommendations (eg Recommendation 3.5 on Training Needs, 3.10 on Multi agency Model of Case Management, 3.13 regarding Referral Pathways, etc).

Action: DoH to refine the spreadsheet presented at the meeting and forward to Dept. of Justice in due course. DoH to write to Dept. of Justice, and the HSE, regarding progressing the HTLF report.

3. Progress new initiatives over 2023.

DoH officials indicated that the HSE Service Plan 2023 was being finalised and referred, in this context, to progressing the pilot CAST project in Limerick in 2023 and the opening of additional CMH beds and the ICRU at Portrane over 2023-24. Progressing relevant HTLF recommendations would also be dependent, as appropriate, on updating the multi-annual HSE capital programme.

It was noted that the HSE were developing a new Integrated Community Case Management System (ICCMS), to be introduced by end 2024. The potential for this to benefit monitoring of HTLF implementation was highlighted.

4. Update of Ministers

Officials at the meeting will update Ministers following the meeting.

5. Any Other Business

Departments to jointly arrange next meeting for January 2023. The next meeting will be chaired by Department of Justice.

6. Summary of actions arising

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Approved