

**Report of the High-Level Taskforce to Consider the Mental Health and Addiction Challenges of those who come into Contact with the Criminal Justice Sector**

**5th Meeting of the HLTF Implementation Steering Committee**

**Monday, September 25th 2023 at 10.00am – Department of Health Offices Miesian Plaza**

**Minutes of meeting**

**Attendees:**

- Siobhán Hargis, Principal Officer, Department of Health (Chair)
- Ben Ryan; Assistant Secretary, Department of Justice
- Mary O'Regan; Principal Officer, Department of Justice
- Alan King; Assistant Principal Officer, Department of Justice
- Michael Murchan; Assistant Principal Officer, Department of Health
- Claire Beauchamp, Administrative Officer, Department of Health
- Aine Mullins, Department of Justice

**Apologies:**

- Siobhán Mc Ardle DOH and Oonagh Ffrench DoJ.

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome - DoH Chairperson.
2. Minutes of meeting of 29 June 2023.
3. Mapping process – outline of work undertaken to-date.
4. Draft Guidance Note – review any agency feedback on the document issued.
5. Outline of progress to date on the implementation of the HLTF recommendations:
  - i) Department of Health; Siobhan Hargis, Principal Officer.
  - ii) Department of Justice; Ben Ryan, Assistant Secretary.
6. Preparation of progress update to Ministers, including review of Budget 2024 process.
7. AOB – next meeting date of Steering Committee.

**Minutes:**

**1. Welcome – DoH Chairperson.**

- 1.1** Chair opened the meeting by welcoming those attending.

## **2. Minutes of meeting of 29 June 2023.**

**2.1** The minutes of the fourth Steering Committee meeting were agreed by the Steering Committee – no further changes made to same.

## **3. Mapping process – outline of work undertaken to date.**

**3.1** There was general agreement between all parties on ownership of actions.

**3.2** From DOH perspective, HSE are working to identify an additional staff resource for the StV Justice workstream, to improve monitoring co-ordination and monitoring of all HLTF HSE recommendations and not just those that are directly relevant to the StV Justice workstream.

**3.3** It was agreed that Justice and Health POs meet to review alignment of reporting dates and work programme generally for Departments/agencies and to ensure that duplication on reporting is avoided. The question was raised as to whether there should be quarterly updates or an annual update – Dept of Justice preference was for quarterly updates to avoid possibility of drift and to enable reporting on a more structured basis. The DOH representatives agreed with this approach, which would also align with StV reporting requirements.

**3.4** DoH and DoJ will review if a better mapping/update template can be developed for early 2024 taking account of various factors including:

- Current spreadsheet is somewhat burdensome.
- DoH/HSE/NIMC may now be in a position to review format of StV/CfL updates overall, to see what improvement can translate to HLTF monitoring.

## **4. Draft Guidance Note – review any agency feedback on the document issued.**

**4.1** DoH received no feedback from HSE on the document after it was sent out for consultation.

**4.2** Mr Ryan highlighted the following points regarding the feedback received from the Probation Service on the draft Guidance Note:

- Important to have a named agency/Department lead for each action to ensure momentum.
- Consideration might be given to a more structured approach to bring all representative groups together.
- Following finalisation of the mapping exercise, leads against actions should be clearer.
- More clarity on structures or mechanisms to facilitate joint actions, eg. referral pathways between justice and health sector would be useful, including community mental health and other care programmes.
- The specific link to the annual Estimates process in the guidance document was welcomed.
- Reference that the workplan/agenda of Sharing the Vision - Justice Workstream is currently limited to actions relating to IPS and NFMHS, and that a broader perspective needs to be maintained by all concerned.

## 5. Outline of progress to date on the implementation of the HLTF recommendations:

### 5.1 Department of Health (S. Hargis)

- DoH received a detailed update on HSE recommendations prior to the HLTF Steering Group Meeting in June and referenced that a further update is due within the week.
  - Progress continues under NIMC and StV Justice Workstream.
  - DoH have requested a further HLTF update from the HSE to reflect most up to date position which will be incorporated into the final report.
  - Expected within the next week or so as StV Secretariat have just requested Q3 update from all workstreams.
- Department continues to work on finalisation of the Mental Health Bill.
  - Confirmation expected soon that priority for publication has been granted, though it's more likely that priority drafting will continue for the Autumn session – 4 drafters continue to work on the Bill.
  - Discussion took place regarding update of current Section 12 of the Mental Health Act 2001 – with reference to the fact that national rollout of the CAST project will take considerable time, following the Limerick pilot.
- Department continues to progress the Health Information Bill.
  - The General Scheme of the Health Information Bill was approved by Government on 19 April this year and Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the Bill by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health was completed in July. Priority drafting is underway with the OPC for publication in Q1 2024 and the Bill will then be brought to Committee stage.
  - A meeting between Mental Health Unit and Health Information Policy Unit planned for 4 October 2023.
  - The ultimate common objective should be to allow smoother sharing of information which is especially pertinent for continuity of care for people leaving prison and entering primary care or other services – S. Hargis indicated that this will be brought to the attention of the Health Information Policy Unit.
- DoH continues to develop its 2024 Estimates Bid for Mental Health, including HLTF.
  - DoH working to ensure that any HLTF related activity is included in any prioritised new development funding.
  - Ms Hargis noted that 14 posts are included in the Bid for Dual Diagnosis (YODA and Sassy), subject to final agreement overall.

### 5.2 Department of Justice (B. Ryan).

- Updated HLTF spreadsheet was finalised some time ago with DoH, relating as well to STV, Connecting for Life, HNA recs etc.
- Detailed updates have been received by DOJ from its three agencies.
- The Inspector of Prisons annual report is currently in the e-Submission process and once Minister McEntee receives this report, D/Justice will send it to DoH before it is published sometime in October.
- Ms O'Regan suggested finalising HLTF Minister's report around the same time as the Inspector of Prisons report, to show progress on HLTF implementation etc. including actively trying to improve services subject to evolving resource and capacity issues for the health and justice sectors and to highlight positive actions that have already been achieved.

- Mental Health training within An Garda Síochána has yet to be rolled out nationally.
- Ms O'Regan also noted it would be useful if Justice could get a line of sight of StV progress on this issue.

## **6. Preparation of progress update to Ministers, including review of Budget 2024 process.**

- DoH sent draft material for health sector to DoJ last week.
  - This primarily comprised of background information and broad content, to be refined.
  - DoH will be able to provide more detailed content when HSE submit their material, to help structure the final report.
- Steering Group will need to consider the structure and level of detail provided.
  - DoH and DOJ agree that the report should focus on the short-term achievements and goals over 2023-24, with medium/long term recommendations perhaps ear-marked for an appendix or similar approach.
  - Refinement of HLTF recommendations under the three Subgroups will be required, with emphasis on Health sector 2023 progress and planned 2024.
  - It may be advantageous to set out all HLTF recommendations in the appendix by subgroup and delivery timeframe rather than by number.
  - Where progress has been made on medium-term and long-term recommendations, some detail on these should be included in the body of the report.
  - DoH are happy to use the same approach as Justice in laying out the report by subgroup and present material in a more thematic style.
  - Introductory paragraphs should be followed by an Executive Summary - with detailed timeframes etc listed in an appendix.
- Need to decide publication date.
  - It was proposed that the report be finalised by mid-October for Ministers, but consideration should be given to an appropriate gap between Budget and any publication of Ministers report.
  - Need to agree that the document will be published, rather than just submitted to Ministers, and any media approach associated with this.
  - A meeting between Minister Butler, Minister McEntee and the Steering Group may be of benefit to maintain momentum and commitment overall for HLTF.

## **7. AOB – next meeting date of Steering Committee**

- Date for next meeting is to be agreed. It may be informed by publication schedule.
- It was agreed that it would be beneficial to have a meeting in December, to take stock of the progress made this year and to set out a plan for 2024. This meeting may require agency representation.