



Ms Éilis Fallon
Committee Secretariat
Committee of Public Accounts

By email: PAC@oireachtas.ie

25th June 2021

Your Ref: SO423 PAC33

Dear Ms Fallon,

I refer to your correspondence of 9 June 2021 in connection with the late laying before the Houses of the Oireachtas of the accounts referenced:

- HSE Consolidated Patients' Private Property Accounts (2019),
- Health Repayment Scheme (Donations) Fund Accounts (2019)
- Special Account for the purposes of the Health (Repayment Scheme) Act 2006 (2019)
- Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland Accounts (2019).

I acknowledge, with apologies, that this Department missed the timeframe set out in the relevant Circular for laying these accounts and omitted to inform the Clerk of the Committee of Public Accounts in advance that exceptional or unusual circumstances would cause an unavoidable brief delay in laying these accounts before the Houses of the Oireachtas.

Due to an administrative error, the NMBI accounts were laid one day late. There was a change of personnel in the Unit at the time, and the Unit had to wait to get a new member of staff registered to lay documents. The other three accounts were laid 8 days late, also due to an administrative error which necessitated resubmission of the accounts to the Department by the HSE and their signature by the HSE's Accounting Officer (CEO), in order to fully meet the procedural requirements for laying the accounts.

More generally, the Department has been under unprecedented and sustained pressure since early 2020 due to its central role in combatting the ongoing Covid-19 public health emergency, resulting in the need to divert many of the Department's resources. This has, as I trust the Committee will understand, impacted significantly on internal unit and team resources, particularly in respect of non-Covid-19 functions, and has contributed to some instances of slight slippage, as was unfortunately the case on this occasion, in achieving full compliance with normal timelines.



Please accept my apologies for the late laying of these accounts and for my Department not informing the Clerk prior to submission that the accounts were subject to exceptional or unusual circumstances which caused an unavoidable delay.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Watt
Secretary General