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07/11/2023

Mr Sam Keenan,
Committee Secretariat,
Public Accounts Committee,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

Re: Ref (S1468 PAC33)

Dear Sam

I refer to your correspondence of 23rd October to Mr. Bernard Gloster, Chief Executive Officer, Health Service Executive, regarding follow up issues from the recent PAC meeting with the HSE.

As you may be aware management and administrative grade staff in the FORSA union in the HSE commenced industrial action on Friday 6th October and this is ongoing. One of the areas affected is the processing and answering of Parliamentary Questions and Representations and other Parliamentary business.

With regard to the follow up information we have managed to collate most of the information requested and where we in the few areas are not in a position to provide the information we will provide that as soon as possible when the industrial action is lifted. We apologise for any inconvenience and trust you will understand the situation.

Please find below and attached the information that is available to respond to the follow up issues.


We are attaching the reply to item one on vacant property separately as we are requesting that this information **not be published** for the reasons stated in the reply.

Please note that at the PAC meeting the Chief Financial Officer was asked about vacant properties. He did not have the benefit of the details with him on the day and in an effort to be helpful to the Committee he gave figures from his best recollection. Having had the chance following the meeting to examine the up to date figures and for the purposes of the committee meeting record the HSE has c4,400 buildings with 214 of these vacant properties. The details regarding those vacant properties is outlined in the attached reply.

Finally, we are also asking that the reply, attached separately, to issue 11. *A note on any legal repercussions arising from the HSE cyberattack, including the prospective outlay on any potential legal action arising from same, not be published either* for the reasons stated in the reply.

If any further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Ray Mitchell
Assistant National Director
Parliamentary Affairs Division

Briefing Note for the Public Accounts Committee

1. **An itemised breakdown of HSE vacant properties, including:**
 - the location of each property,
 - how long each property has been vacant,
 - the size of each property, • the value of each property,
 - the cost of upkeep, including security provided, for each property,
 - the condition of each property

Please see reply attached separately.

2. **An update on the following three projects:**
 - Lil Red's Legacy,
 - An Síol in Santry, and
 - the Finglas primary care centre

- **Lil Red's Legacy**

The Lil Reds Legacy campaign is coordinated and managed by Lil Red's family, and whilst this is independent of the HSE Sepsis programme there is continuous engagement with the HSE and the family. Over the last number of months the HSE Sepsis programme have had extensive engagement with Lil Reds Legacy Campaign including:

- o Consultation on the Sepsis Information Leaflets including the use of an image with a likeness to Lil Red within the leaflet,
- o The leaflets were distributed to 1,700 GP surgeries and 1,850 community pharmacies and was also translated into 10 languages and is available to download on the HSE website
- o Lil Reds Legacy Campaign very kindly took an active involvement in the 2023 World Sepsis Day including a detail family interview in the Irish Times
- o The Sepsis programme is currently scoping the development of a public awareness campaign and are engaging with a number of stakeholders, including the Lil Reds Legacy Sepsis Awareness Campaign, to provide input into the development and delivery of the campaign.

- **An Saol in Santry**

An Saol Foundation is a company limited by Guarantee (since November 2014) and a charity registered with the Charities Regulator (RCN 20149796) and the Revenue Commissioners (CHY 21684). It was established by the family of a person who experienced a Severe Acquired Brain Injury to develop bespoke services for him.

The An Saol project was a three-year pilot programme approved for funding via the Department of Health and operated by this Foundation. It is the stated goal of An Saol to operate a daytime therapeutic service for three to five persons at any given time. Persons attending have a diagnosis of a severe Acquired Brain Injury (sABI) and An Saol offers an intensive and inclusive neurological rehabilitation programme, informed by international practice. The pilot project has also referenced their goal to prepare the ground for the development of a permanent residential and respite space for persons with sABI.

In 2018 a Service Agreement with An Saol and the HSE was signed with a commitment from the Department of Health to fund the pilot project over a three-year phase to the tune of €1,500,000. An Saol received €500,000 in 2019, €138,888 in 2020, €166,664 in 2021 and €500,000 in 2022.

In April 2022, the An Saol Foundation submitted their mid-term review of the pilot project to the HSE. It included a proposal for the next phase of the An Saol Foundation Project: The Five-Year Implementation Phase (2023- 2027).

In January 2023, the HSE issued a report on the Pilot Project, together with recommendations for further development. The HSE also confirmed core funding to maintain the current levels of service and committed to engage with the organisation to further develop the service, in the context of future budgets and service plans.

The HSE has received a proposal from An Saol Foundation that details the development of Teach An Saol, a National Centre for Life and Living with a severe Acquired Brain Injury (sABI). The proposal is currently the subject of ongoing discussions between the HSE, Dublin Council, An Saol Foundation and others to explore and agree how the proposed centre can be developed.

- **Finglas Primary Care Centre**

Finglas Primary Care Centre is being delivered via an overall development of a block of land between Cappagh Road, Cardiffsbridge Road, Wellmount Avenue and Fergal’s Lane. The stakeholders in the delivery of this development include the Dublin Archdiocese, Dublin City Council (DCC), the HSE, the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb) and the local schools. The overall development will deliver a new church and parish centre, housing provision, new sporting facilities for the CDETb and local schools along with the new Primary Care Centre.

The Stage 1 Preliminary Design Report for the Primary Care Centre has recently been approved and the project has progressed to the more detailed Developed Design stage, with a planning application being the next milestone for the project, to be submitted in Q1 2024. The planned developments require transfer of lands between the parties, and this is currently in progress with the HSE engaging with all parties to complete the necessary property transactions, which are anticipated to complete by year-end.

3. The number of residential or respite care properties that are currently awaiting allocation of staff across the State, or awaiting HSE funding for staffing levels for residential or respite care homes.

The HSE National Disability Operations Office, in conjunction with the 9 CHO Areas, is endeavouring to gather the relevant information required to respond to the above question. However, this is impacted by the current Industrial Action on the part of FORSA and its members. We hope to be in a position to collate the detail to present to the Committee as soon as the Industrial Action is lifted.

Contextual Information

Residential Services

Residential services make up the largest part of the Disability funding disbursed by the HSE, representing over 60% of the total budget. The HSE developed a Residential Capacity Database to capture the number of residential placements / contract capacity per the service arrangement between the nine CHO areas and the service provider agencies. The end of September 2023 position indicates that there were 8,355 residential places for people with a disability – children occupy 155 places, which constitutes about 2% of the total.

In previous years, funding has been allocated in the National Service Plan to provide for additional new emergency residential placements, as follows:

- The HSE responded to 474 “emergency places/cases” between 2014 and 2016.
- NSP 2017 made provision for 185 new emergency residential placements

- Between 2018 and 2020, the HSE developed 252 new emergency places across the 9 CHOs.
- In accordance with the NSP 2021, 91 new emergency residential places were developed; a further 25 planned residential places also opened in 2021; 4 adult transfers to Tusla also took place. A further 19 people aged under 65 living in nursing homes were supported to move to homes of their choosing in the community, during the year.
- In accordance with the NSP 2022, the HSE developed 103 new emergency residential places together with 11 Planned Residential places and 18 new intensive support packages and 19 new supported living packages. The CHO Areas indicated that 22 people transitioned from Nursing Homes to homes of their choosing in the community and 32 packages to support adults ageing out of Tusla services were put in place.
- In accordance with the NSP 2023, the HSE has been allocated funding to provide 43 additional residential places in response to current need (At end of September 2023, 103 new emergency residential places were developed). In addition, in line with the Winter Plan, 27 people received new residential places with 3 further receiving home care packages. A further 25 residential care packages were developed for young people ageing out of Tusla services in line with the Joint Protocol.

Respite Services

The HSE and its funded Agencies provide respite care to children and adults with disabilities, in a variety of settings for various lengths of time, depending on the needs of the individual service user and their family or carer, and according to available resources.

There has been increased investment in Respite Service over the last number of years and this has impacted positively on the level of service delivered to people with a disability:

- In 2021, the HSE received funding to develop nine additional centre-based respite services, providing some 10,400 additional respite nights along with a range of alternative respite projects including Saturday clubs, breakaway schemes, and summer schemes.
- In 2022, funding was allocated to develop three additional specialist centre-based services to provide 4,032 nights to 90 children. One to be Prader-Willi appropriate and the other two to provide high-support respite for children and young adults with complex support needs, in addition to seven further respite services, which would provide 9,408 nights to 245 children and adults in a full year.
- In 2023, funding was allocated to five additional respite services and increase one service from part time to full time opening to provide 7,872 additional nights to 278 people in a full year. Along with, the provision of 27 additional in-home respite packages to children and young adults in a full year and 265 day-only respite packages to 180 people in a full year.

However, a significant underlying challenge relates to the latent unmet need for residential and respite care, which exists in our services because of the absence of multi-annual investment during the economic downturn. As a result of this, we are now experiencing a high annual demand for emergency residential places and respite services to respond to the most urgent cases on our waiting list. This is forcing CHO's to procure new residential services on a single placement basis only at substantially higher cost than could be achieved through an appropriately commissioned multi-annual investment programme.

The cost of procuring Emergency Placements, for example, has increased significantly over the last few years. The average cost of a new residential placement has increased from €284k in 2019 to €332k per place in 2022 and 63% of placements in 2022 were through for-profit providers.

The provision of residential and respite services has also come under increasing pressure in the past number of years due to a number of impacting factors such as:

- An increase in the number of children and adults who are seeking access to respite and residential services as a reflection of general population increase;
- Increasing levels of complexity across the sector due to better and improved health care;
- An increase in the age of people with a disability resulting in people presenting with “changing needs”;
- A significant number of respite beds have been utilised on longer-term basis due to the presenting complexity of the individual with a disability and also due to home circumstances, which prevents availability of the bed to other respite users;
- The regulation of service provision as set by HIQA, which requires Service Providers to comply with regulatory standards in order to meet regulation. Standards specify a requirement for personal and appropriate space which impacts on the capacity and Statement of Purpose for a Designated Centre. This has had a direct impact on capacity where, for example, respite beds are no longer allowed within a residential setting e.g. vacated by residents who go home at weekends or for holidays, can no longer be used for respite.
- Implementation of the national policy on congregated settings (Time to Move on from Congregated Settings Policy) is also affecting capacity.
- Lack of availability of locum staff to cover core staff absences (and reluctance to use agency staffing due to lack of consistency and continuity for service users).
- Retention and Recruitment is a significant challenge for the HSE and funded agencies and is affecting service delivery. The challenges in this are a result of a range of factors including:
 - a) The limited availability of specifically-trained staff with the necessary qualifications in the numbers required, especially therapy staff;
 - b) Pay equality issues for Section 39 Service Providers;
 - c) Competition for staff both from within the health and social care sectors but also beyond;
 - d) The public and media perceptions of some areas of the service provision or indeed of some providers.

The majority of disability service provision in Ireland (approximately 80%) has historically and continues to be provided by voluntary agencies funded under Section 38 and Section 39 of the Health Act 2004, and private for profit organisations. These Service Provider agencies, in partnership with the local CHO Areas, continue to work to implement new developments in line with the National Service Plan, including tendering where necessary. This also includes addressing the key challenges arising in relation to the procurement of appropriate housing for Residential and Respite services in a buoyant housing market, and the undertaking of necessary works to ensure HIQA compliance – which must be secured before any new facility can become operational.

4. A note on HSE annual expenditure on the storage of PPE.

The HSE has outsourced the PPE to the following companies and the costs are outlined in the below table.

| Company Name | Monthly Avg. cost for storage | Annual costs |
|--------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| EKO | €106,663 | €1,279,956 |
| BBL | €140,849 | €1,690,188 |
| JMC | €209,372 | €2,512,464 |
| Total | | €5,482,608 |

5. A note on dental treatment service scheme (DTSS) attendance in 2022 and 2023, including the total attendances in 2022, and figures on extractions and fillings.

The Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) provides access for medical cardholders to dental examination and treatments through a contracted care arrangement with independent dentists. The scheme is available to current medical card holders over 16 years of age, who may access care from any of the Dentists on the DTSS list. This list is available at local HSE Dental clinics and online at HSE Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) Online Services.

If a patient has difficulty accessing such treatment through the DTSS he/she should firstly contact their local HSE dental service.

On 1 May 2022, a number of changes and fee adjustments were introduced in the DTSS to support the scheme. These included an expansion in the definition of the Examination item with a corresponding fee increase and reintroduction of Scale and Polish. There were also increases of 40-60% in fees paid to contractors for most treatment items including restorations, routine extractions and dentures.

On foot of these measures, the number of patients accessing care each month and the numbers of treatments being provided under the DTSS have increased since May 2022.

In 2023, the number of unique patients treated each month under the DTSS has been higher when compared to the same month in 2022. In addition, the percentage of eligible adults who access the scheme has been higher in every month in 2023 when compared to the corresponding period in 2022. So far this year (September 2023 PCRS Production Report) 228,216 unique patients were treated YTD 2023 compared to 202,010 for the same period in 2022.

The total number of unique patients treated under the DTSS in 2022 was 256,768. There were 87,558 Extractions plus 20,764 Surgical Extractions (Total Extractions: 108,322) and 86,203 Amalgam Fillings plus 133,740 Composite Fillings (Total Fillings: 219,943) claims paid in 2022.

| Treatment Items funded | 2022 | 2023 YTD September |
|----------------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| Unique Number of patients | 256,768 | 228,216 |
| Extractions | 87,558 | 66,819 |
| Surgical Extractions | 20,764 | 16,120 |
| Amalgam (silver) fillings | 86,203 | 22,956 |
| Composite (white) fillings | 133,740 | 161,820 |

6. A note on the school dental scheme, including the class/year during which children are seen, nationally and in Laois and Offaly.

The school dental scheme aims to target 3 classes (2nd, 4th, 6th) but is resource dependent. The majority of areas are targeting 6th class only: most are completing the provision of service to children from school year 2022/2023.

Currently, only one dental area has resources enabling them to target 25% of 2nd class children, with no dental area indicating that they have sufficient resources to target 4th class. Two dental areas have not yet completed targeting 6th class from 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 due a reduction in dentists in the past 4 years.

| Dental Area | School year being completed |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Laois | 2019/2020 |
| Offaly | 2020/2021 |

7. The number of dentists, in each of the DTSS and school dental scheme, that are accepting patients.

In September 2023 there were 806 private Dentists and Clinical Dental Technicians nationally with a DTSS contract. The breakdown of the contractor numbers is provided by CHO area in the table below.

Availability of appointments fluctuates according to the daily capacity of the practices- it is not possible to indicate which may have available appointments on any given day.

| CHO | Number of DTSS Contracts at Sept 2023 |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| CHO 1 | 104 |
| CHO 2 | 87 |
| CHO 3 | 76 |
| CHO 4 | 196 |
| CHO 5 | 76 |
| CHO 6 | 32 |
| CHO 7 | 90 |
| CHO 8 | 71 |
| CHO 9 | 74 |
| Total | 806 |

The HSE Community Dental Service provides dental care to children and eligible adults at over 180 HSE Dental Clinics. The table below indicates the total dentist workforce at end September 2023 in each of the 9 CHOs. The service provides emergency dental access to children between 0 and 16 years, it provides a targeted service for children through the school dental programme and adult medical card holders with additional needs through the special care programme. In the past number of years, emergency care has been provided to the increasing number of refugees who have not yet been provided with a medical card, and some locations have provided emergency care to medical cardholders who were unable to access care.

| CHO | Dental Surgeon, General | Dental Surgeon, Principal | Dental Surgeon, Senior | Dental Surgeon, Senior Administrative |
|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | 14.0 | 6.0 | 3.0 | 2.0 |
| 2 | 15.0 | 2.0 | 4.0 | 2.0 |
| 3 | 14.0 | 1.0 | 5.0 | 3.0 |
| 4 | 27.0 | 4.0 | 7.0 | 6.0 |
| 5 | 19.0 | 3.0 | 5.0 | 4.0 |
| 6 | 9.0 | 1.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 |
| 7 | 19.0 | 2.0 | 4.0 | 5.0 |
| 8 | 14.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| 9 | 23.0 | 3.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 |
| National Total | 154.0 | 26.0 | 37.0 | 31.0 |

8. On what date did the Department of Health last have stakeholder engagement with the Irish Dental Association (pg. 37). Please note that representatives of the HSE committed to provide this information to the Committee.

The Irish Dental Association last met with the Minister for Health on April 24, 2023.

9. An update on the proposed 97-bed unit for Wexford General Hospital

The project to develop a new 97 bed ward block at Wexford General Hospital is included in the Capital Plan, and funding has been allocated this year to progress it. A design team was appointed in September 2022. It is proposed to submit an application for planning permission by the end of the year.

This is noted to be a priority project for the Ireland East Hospital Group and for Wexford General Hospital.

A pre-planning meeting was recently held with representatives of the local authority. Additional surveys (Environmental screening and traffic impact assessment) are to be prepared with a view to 'future proofing' the site for future development.

A Strategic Assessment Report and Preliminary Business Case are currently being prepared in respect of the proposed development, in line with the requirements of the Public Spending Code, with a view to early confirmation of 'approval in principle', and thereafter to progress the project, subject to funding, prioritisation, and statutory approvals.

10. A note on access to the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) for children's dental services, including how long children have to wait before they can access the NTPF and how long they have to wait before they are sent to a private provider.

The National Treatment Purchase Fund is an independent statutory body which arranges for the provision of hospital treatment to classes of persons determined by the Minister for Health. It also publishes information in respect of the Inpatient, Day case, Planned Procedure and Outpatient Waiting lists. The NTPF works to reduce hospital waiting lists by enabling purchase of care for adults and children on hospital waiting lists. Patients whose treatment is one on the NTPF list who are waiting longer than 3 months and clinically suitable may be eligible to access treatment under the fund.

Maxillofacial surgery is the only dentally related treatment on the NTPF list- there are no general dental procedures on the list. NTPF does not provide funding for patients on HSE community waiting lists.

11. A note on any legal repercussions arising from the HSE cyberattack, including the prospective outlay on any potential legal action arising from same.

Please see reply attached separately

12. An update on the tender process for the national private ambulance service, and the overall budget that the HSE has set aside for the service

The tender process to establish a panel of suitably qualified private ambulance service providers was concluded in late 2022. The formal name of this panel was for the “Provision of ad hoc Ambulance services to transfer low and medium acuity patients between healthcare facilities”.

Since then ten mini competitions to deliver private ambulance services to hospital groups and/or hospitals have been commenced and are at various stages of development; please refer to the table below.

| Project ID | Project Description | Contract Value (est.) | Current Status |
|------------|---|---|--|
| 15810 | Private Ambulance Service - National Acute Hospitals | N/A due to FORSA Industrial action. Will be provided when the action is lifted. | Panel established in late 2022 |
| 20478 | Private Ambulance Service for Saolta University Health Care Group | €20m | Currently collating Usage Data with Saolta to include in the Specification and to determine the requirements for shift versus ad-hoc services. |
| 19953 | Patient Ambulance Services for Ireland East Hospital Group | €11.4m over 5 years | Contract awarded. |
| 20336 | Private Ambulance services - South West Hospital Group | €3.5m | Awaiting engagement with and data from South West Hospitals |
| 21061 | Private ambulance support for the National Acute Hospitals – National Ambulance Service | €18.5m over 5 years | Tender completed; contracts sent to service providers for signature. |
| 20413 | Private Ambulance Services for the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group - St James Hospital | €2m over 5 years | Contract Awarded 18 th June 2023 |
| 20658 | Private Ambulance Service for University Hospital Limerick | €1.9m | Currently collating Usage Data with ULHG to include in the Specification and to determine the requirements for shift versus ad-hoc services. |

| | | | |
|-------|--|--------------------|---|
| 21980 | Ambulance Services for Cavan & Monaghan Hospital | €2.7m over 5 years | Tender outcome notified – managing appeals with legal support |
| 22086 | Private Ambulance Services for Naas General Hospital | €1.75m | Tender evaluation underway |
| 22085 | Private Ambulance Services Tallaght, the Coombe, St. Luke's Rathgar | €0.75m | Process on hold pending some clarifications |
| 22087 | Private Ambulance Services for Portlaoise & Tullamore Midland Regional Hospitals | €4.5m over 5 years | Tender evaluation underway |

13. In relation to a settlement in retirement relating to rest days arrears which was referenced in a briefing on high earners provided to the Committee by the HSE, how many years did those rest days span?

This payment relates to the employee claim of 1.47 years in salary for rest day and the settlement was based on the following:

The establishment of a new National service arrangement to support An Garda Síochána in the management of critical incidents, the onerous nature of the rota (1:1 rota, 24/7 on call) for the period 2006 – 2011. The Claim relates to compensatory rest associated with this period for which the employee had not been previously remunerated.

14. A note confirming figures relating to Emergency Department consultant recruitment.

The number of CAAC approved Emergency Medicine Consultant Posts as at 23 October 2023

| Total Number of CAAC approved Emergency Medicine Consultant Posts at 23.10.2023 | | 202 | |
|--|--|------------|------------|
| Filled CAAC Approved Emergency Medicine Posts | | Number | % |
| No of CAAC approved posts currently filled by permanent consultants | | 141 | 70% |
| No of CAAC approved posts filled by temporary & locum consultants | | 26 | 13% |
| No of CAAC Approved posts filled by agency consultants | | 1 | 0% |
| Total number of CAAC approved posts filled, regardless of tenure | | 168 | 83% |
| Vacancies (includes unknown status and future starters assigned) | | | |
| Total number of CAAC approved posts vacant | | 34 | 17% |
| Of the total number of vacant posts: | | | |
| No of posts with candidate future start date assigned | | 0 | 0% |
| No of posts with an unknown status | | 0 | 0% |
| Number of newly created posts in the last 12 months which are vacant (recruitment is either underway or about to commence) | | 27 | 79% |
| No of posts filled which have not/never been approved by CAAC | | 9* | |

* This refers to unapproved EM posts. This is the number of posts which are filled but which have not/never been approved by CAAC. 7 of which are CIDs, 1 Agency and 1 Locum.

15. A note on the issues encountered in the first phase of the rollout of the integrated financial management system (IFMS)

Due to the ongoing FORSA industrial action the information is not available. When the Industrial action is lifted we will as soon as possible submit the information.

16. A note on the redevelopment of the St. Raphael's campus in Youghal

A Masterplan for St Raphael's Campus is currently being considered with input from Cork/Kerry Community Healthcare. The projects listed below provide a framework, which will inform the proposed masterplan for coordinated future development on the existing campus.

- Approved Project:
 - Construct a new 60-bed CNU residential care facility.
 - This project is included in the Capital Programme for 2023 with funding allocated in 2023 to progress the project. The design team are currently working on Stage 2A/B (Developed Design/Planning) and it is proposed that an application for planning permission will be submitted by the end of the year. Once planning has been achieved, the aim will be to progress to tender and commence construction of the project during 2024.
- In addition, a number of proposed projects are under early stage consideration for possible inclusion in the Capital Plan, subject to agreement on service need, priority, availability of funding and other relevant factors:
 - Proposal to renovate/refurbish the existing main block on site in order to create a Paramedic Training College for the National Ambulance Service. The proposed project is at scoping/appraisal stage.
 - Older Persons Day Care Service.
 - Extension and refurbishment of the existing Disability Service facility (Oakvale Residential home).
 - Provision of a new ambulance base.

17. Expenditure on private ambulances in 2022, the expected spend on same in 2023, and the percentage of ambulance services in the State provided by private providers.

The vast majority of expenditure each year is incurred by Hospital Groups. There is no central repository of information regarding the use of private ambulance companies across the HSE; there is only financial data relative to invoice values, collated by finance.

Due to the ongoing FORSA industrial action the information is not available. When the Industrial action is lifted we will as soon as possible submit the information.

18. The number of vacancies in the National Ambulance Service and the number of staff required.

Due to the ongoing FORSA industrial action the information is not available. When the Industrial action is lifted we will as soon as possible submit the information.

19. A note on the primary care centre for Portlaoise.

The Portlaoise Primary Care Centre (PCC) is being delivered as a direct build project by the HSE on the grounds of St. Fintan's Hospital Campus. A capital submission was completed for the Portlaoise PCC project in 2019 and capital approval was granted to initiate the project in 2020.

Stage 1 of the design process for Portlaoise PCC was completed at the end of 2021, and a Strategic Assessment Report has now been finalised in line with Public Spending Code protocols. Subject to capital funding and stage gate approvals, the HSE intends to progress the project further in 2024, with a view to tender action and commencement of construction, subject to prioritisation and funding availability.

20. An update on the Mountrath health centre, including the timelines for progress on same.

HSE Capital & Estates are in discussions with the Housing Agency with a view to purchasing a portion of their site at Portlaoise Road, Mountrath, Co. Laois for the purpose of developing a Primary Care Centre. A pre-planning meeting has taken place with Laois County Council for this proposed use of the site. In parallel, the Schedule of Accommodation is being updated in conjunction with primary care service colleagues to ensure all defined needs have been incorporated.

A due diligence exercise is being undertaken with regard to the site whilst the HSE await the Housing Agency's agreement to the land transaction. If approved, the acquisition of the property will be progressed in line with DPER Circular 17 /2016 Policy for Property Acquisition and for Disposal of Surplus Property, the HSE's Property Protocol, and other relevant formal processes. More definitive plans for the planned delivery of the proposed primary care centre at Mountrath, Co Laois, will be put in place on completion of the site acquisition.

**Health Service Executive
November 2023**