



Ms Máirín Ryan
CEO
Health Information and Quality Authority

By email: mryan@hiqa.ie; emccann@hiqa.ie

February 25, 2022

Dear Ms Ryan,

I am writing to you in relation to the establishment of a Strategic Workforce Advisory Group which my Department is in the process of putting in place.

The role of this Group will be to examine and make recommendations around strategic workforce challenges in front-line carer roles in home support and nursing homes. Potential areas to be considered include recruitment, retention, education and training, and career development. Please see attached the provisional Terms of Reference for the Group for your information, which will be finalised when the Group meets.

It is envisaged that the Group's membership will be from across several relevant government Departments and agencies. To this end, I would like to invite you to nominate a representative from your Department to join the Group.

The inaugural meeting of the Group is scheduled for Thursday, March 3rd, 2022 at 11:30 am. I would appreciate if you could send the name of your nominee directly to Rachael_O'Donoghue@health.gov.ie and Paul_Rowe@health.gov.ie no later than March 1st, 2022.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Watt
Secretary General

Strategic Workforce Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Minister for Mental Health and Older People has committed to establishing a Cross Departmental Strategic Workforce Advisory Group.

Areas to be considered by the Group include the recruitment, retention, education and training, and career development of front-line carers in home support and nursing homes.

2. Role and Functions

The role of the Group will be to examine strategic workforce challenges in publicly and privately provided front-line carer roles in home support and nursing homes, and to engage with relevant stakeholders to facilitate their views during the process. The objective of the Group will be to identify the issues concerned, and to make recommendations to the Minister for Mental Health and Older People, where appropriate, to respond to the identified issues and to develop a draft action plan for implementation for the Minister's consideration.

The Group will:

- Agree and adopt Terms of Reference.
- Advise on the further identification of key members who will have responsibility for designated deliverables.
- Engage with cross sectoral stakeholders, professional bodies and civil service experts.
- Make recommendations for consideration by the relevant Minister or Ministers.
- Review relevant national and international literature to identify best practice.

Terms of Reference

- 1) Agree and progress a structured programme of ongoing consultative engagements with key sectoral stakeholders for the lifetime of the Group to:
 - a. further explore and define the issues, listen to stakeholder views and identify approaches to respond to the strategic workforce challenges.
 - b. gather information, evidence and data as required from stakeholders to inform the work of the Group.
 - c. consult on any proposed recommendations and/or actions arising.
- 2) Identify and examine key issues in recruitment, retention, education and training and career development of front-line carers in home support and nursing homes.
- 3) Direct the collection and analysis of required data and information, including from the Group's members or bodies under their aegis, as needed.

- 4) Oversee and provide direction, guidance and support in examining these issues.
- 5) Engage with sectoral stakeholders in line with an agreed programme of engagement.
- 6) Provide a forum for agreement on strategic approaches to address the workforce challenges in the sector.
- 7) Develop a report for the consideration of the Minister for Mental Health and Older People, providing:
 - a. An outline of the Group's key findings on a thematic basis.
 - b. Recommendations to respond to the identified findings, as appropriate.
 - c. A draft Action Plan to support implementation of any recommendations.
 - d. Consideration, as required, of key enablers and impact assessment (including costs) of actions and recommendations.
 - e. Consideration of the need and design of a mechanism for periodic monitoring of implementation of the Action Plan.

Approval and/or adoption of any proposed Action Plan will be a matter for the Minister, and as required, Government.

3. Membership

Members of the Strategic Workforce Advisory Group are responsible for the implementation of agreed relevant actions in their respective organisations.

The Group will comprise of Cross-Departmental/Agency membership with representatives from:

- Department of Health (Chair)
- Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment
- Department of Justice
- Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
- Department of Social Protection
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- HIQA
- HSE Older Persons
- HSE National HR
- Solas

4. Terms of Engagement

4.1. The Chair shall:

- 4.1.1. Set and manage the agenda for each meeting.
- 4.1.2. Encourage broad and effective participation from members.
- 4.1.3. Conclude each meeting with a summary of decisions and/or actions.

- 4.1.4. Sign off meeting minutes in consultation with Team members.
- 4.2. It is anticipated that Group will meet every two weeks for the first 6 to 8 weeks and the frequency of meetings thereafter will be determined by the Chair in consultation with the Group.
- 4.3. Attendance is required by members at all meetings, and where this is not possible an alternate will attend in their place, agreed in advance with the Chair. Papers, contributions, and decisions provided by those representing agencies are on behalf of those agencies.
- 4.4. A Secretariat will be provided by the Department of Health to assist the work of the Group. It will arrange for circulation of relevant documentation, records of meetings, and communications with regard to the convening of meetings.
- 4.5. Meetings will be documented by the Secretary, including actions to be taken, main points discussed, etc.
- 4.6. Draft minutes will be circulated to Group members following each meeting and approved subject to any appropriate amendments at each subsequent meeting [approved minutes will be published on the Department of Health's website subject to limited redaction if required e.g., to protect the integrity of the deliberative process and/or other matters falling under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI)].
- 4.7. The Chair may invite third parties to participate in meetings to provide expert input and advice. The Chair may ask such persons to prepare discussion documents as appropriate.
- 4.8. Each Group member will be required to provide relevant material, papers, and updates in advance of meetings.

25 February 2022