

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



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Dear Colleagues

REBUILDING HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

Following on from my commitment to update you all following the weekly meeting of the Management Board, please find below my update following the Management Board meeting on Wednesday 14 October 2020 which considered a range of issues.

The Board discussed the increasing pressures on elective services in the context of growing Covid-19 admissions to hospitals. Trust Chief Executives provided an overview of the current position within each Trust. The Board noted the seriousness of the situation which will be monitored closely.

The Board received an update on the progress to date on the Adult Social Care report in respect of the work undertaken by the Adult Social Care Governance Surge Planning Group. The Board was advised that work is ongoing to further revise and refresh guidance on key issues in the sector. Financial support measures are proposed to support domiciliary care providers and to provide additional funding for care homes. The rolling programme of testing for care home residents and staff is continuing and plays a significant role in helping to minimise the risk of COVID-19 through early identification of single cases and potential clusters of cases. Current workforce challenges were acknowledged and consideration is being given to measures to address likely staffing pressures. Going forward, this work will be reported through the Adult Surge Group and the work of the Enhancing Clinical Framework.

The Board received an overview of the proposed short term way forward for the stabilisation of surgical services in SWAH, with an option to include an opportunity to combine provision of theatre capacity to visiting Consultants for Elective Surgery whilst they provided essential Out of Hours cover. A plan for the weekend OOH rota will be finalised on Friday.

Following on from last week's discussions, the Board received an overview on how general Acute Hospital Bed Occupancy figures would be collated and reported on.

From Monday, Trust Control rooms will take the lead in providing a 9.00am occupancy rate analysis and Daily Projected Bed Occupancy Rate to include the occupancy rate for COVID clinical patients.

The Board considered revised Terms of Reference for the Management Board. In the context of managing the response to the emerging second surge and any subsequent surges, the aim is to ensure a system wide focus on managing not only the ongoing Covid-19 situation but also to continue with the rebuilding work, recognising that this will need to be adjusted to respond to business continuity needs. Planning for the introduction of a DoH Covid-19 Surge/Gold Command Group is underway to ensure a system wide focus on managing the response to surge and Covid-19, aligned with oversight of both Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 activity. A Covid-19 taskforce has been established which will have oversight of policy, advice and support.

I trust that you find this update helpful and I look forward to our continuing discussion on the vitally important work of rebuilding HSC services in the weeks and months ahead.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robin Swann', written in a cursive style.

Robin Swann MLA
Minister for Health

