Health Budget Oversight Group (HBOG)
3:00pm, 20th November 2019
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Health Service Executive:	Ann-Marie Hoey, Stephen Mulvany
Department of Health:	Paul Bolger, Fiona Prendergast, Gerry O'Brien, Kevin Coleman, Denise McCarthy
D/Public Expenditure & Reform:	Ronnie Downes, David Owens, Jessica Lawless, Terry Jennings, Robert Scott, Deirdre Collins, Albert Morris, Seán Prior, Cian McCarthy, Kevin O'Farrell

1. Minutes from previous meeting

October Minutes agreed by all.

All agreed in principle that going forward Minutes would be published routinely. Retrospective meeting minutes have been made public under Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

2. Pay and Numbers strategy update 2020

More technical discussions will continue offline between the HSE, DoH and PER in regards WTE numbers calculations. DPER were clear the 119,127 WTE end-year limit agreed in March 2019 remained extant, noting the end-October figure was being reported at 119,269.

HSE said the DOH were holding money centrally for posts yet to be recruited in 2019, which is a normal part of the control process. It was noted that the draft WTE limit year end "refresh" data indicated an increase in pay budgets and consequent increase in likely final 2019 WTE limits. HSE said movement between non-pay and pay can happen provided it is appropriate. DPER and DoH queried this – it was pointed out that moving non-pay to pay created a multi-year commitment. HSE explained giving examples of appropriate movements in budget between non-pay and pay and vice-versa i.e. where outside costs were replaced by recruitment such as when private sector cleaning contracts are taken in-house.

The HSE gave details of the validation exercise which is aimed at providing internal assurance around this movement in pay budgets. It was agreed that this validation exercise would be shared with DOH and DPER once completed.

There was a discussion with regards to 2020 posts – will be reported against a profile each month.

3. National Service Plan Update

HSE confirmed that the Pay & Numbers Strategy (PNS) will be finalised prior to year-end. The National Service Plan (NSP) identifies indicative WTE limits that are referenced as subject to validation via the process to finalise the PNS. NSP is currently awaiting Ministerial sign-off. The December HBOG will be partly dedicated to a discussion around numbers issues.

4. **2020 Savings measures**

There was a discussion regarding next year's savings measures.
€125m of specified savings;

- €95m PCRS for Biosimilars and for pharmacy fee restructuring savings.
- €30m General savings requirements across all operational areas.

The DoH commended the HSE in the controls they have implemented to date. The HSE shared their CEO letter of 6 November 2019 to HSE Executive Management Team and Senior Leadership Team. HSE added that they find the HBOG forum useful and hope to move to a more sustainable process to have PNS published by December each year.

5. **2020 proposed meeting dates.**

Potential dates for 2020 HBOG meetings were circulated to the Group. The 13th January will be the first meeting of 2020 and will focus on plan for the year and expectations with regards to this Group, the provision of documentation and the process around Minutes, their agreement and publication.

6. **Any Other Business**

The format and structure of the HBOG going forward will be discussed in detail when the HBOG convenes in January 2020.

Actions: PER to produce a short paper reviewing the first year of the HBOG, what worked well and what issues arose. This will be circulated prior to and discussed at the January meeting.

DPER asked that performance budgeting information be supplied by DoH this week.

Next meeting to take place on 18th December 3pm.