Health Budget Oversight Group Minutes

1st October 2020. 2:30pm

Health Service Executive:	Anne Marie Hoey, Colum Maddox, Damien McCallion, Mark O'Donoghue, Seán Bresnan, Stephen Mulvany, Tim Cummins.
Department of Health:	Aidan Gilchrist, Claire Doyle, Denise McCarthy, Emer Hanney, Evan Walker, Fiona Prendergast, Kevin Colman, Linda Learmouth, Louise Carrigan, Mairead Keating, Mark Hennessy, Matthew Dignam, Paul Bolger, Rhona Broderick, Shane Corr.
D/Public Expenditure & Reform:	Ronnie Downes (Chair), David Owens, Terry Jennings, Patrick Moran, Robert Scott, Deirdre Collins, Seán Prior, Cian McCarthy, Kevin O'Farrell.

1. **Minutes of Meeting of 10 September 2020**

Minutes from the previous HBOG meeting on 10 September 2020 were agreed.

2. **Update on Covid-19 Action Plan**

- ***Testing and Tracing***

The Group was updated with the latest projections for Testing and Tracing expenditure through to the end of 2020. The most significant cost drivers in this area are: the number of tests being administered each day; and the hiring of swabbers to replace staff who had previously being redeployed from other areas of the public service.

It was noted that the number of tests completed per week has run between 80,000 and 100,000 on a regular basis. NPHET have completed forecasting model which shows an increase in numbers required from December to March.

Department of Health will share the projections and supporting material with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

- ***Personal Protective Equipment***

The Department of Health's model of demand and expenditure for PPE has been reviewed and approved by the Quality Assurance Group. It was noted that the model has since been updated to include new epidemiological projections from the Irish Epidemiological Modelling Advisory Group.

A profile of orders and expenditure to the end of December 2020 will be shared with the group in advance of the next meeting.

- ***Accommodation and Isolation Facilities.***

The Group was informed that the HSE was intending to renew the license agreement with Citywest Hotel, to use the hotel's rooms and conference facility for various purposes, including self-isolation for covid-positive patients, temporary accommodation for healthcare workers returning from abroad, and other non-covid healthcare services such as allergy testing. Queries were raised over

the cost-per-room, especially during a period in which the hotel would be running at very low capacity.

3. **Emerging 2020 Outturn**

The Group was informed that there remains uncertainty as regards the projected outturn for the Health Vote in 2020. A discussion took place on the scope for savings throughout the health service, as a result of reduced activity in non-covid services. It was reiterated that a report from the HSE on the total projected expenditure was required before a meaningful discussion on a Supplementary Estimate for 2020 can take place.

The Department of Health will circulate a note explaining the variance between the HSE Flash Reports and the Cash Issues at the end of September.

4. **A.O.B**

There was no other business

Next meeting is scheduled for 29 October 2020 at 11:30a.m.