



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive



Mr Sean Egan  
Head, Healthcare Regulation  
Health Information and Quality Authority  
George's Court  
George's Lane  
Smithfield  
Dublin 7

**18 February 2022**

**Our Ref: CEO/JM/L6**

**HIQA Ref: TAR\_014**

Dear Sean,

I refer to the TAR\_014 conducted by HIQA at LUH last year and subsequent publication of your report in October 2021. I refer also to my last correspondence in this matter dated 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide you with an update on further progress with regard to the implementation of the recommendations of the Price Review. In doing so I wish to provide you with an update on the position with regard to the Gynae services at LUH.

The purpose of this correspondence is also to outline the steps we have taken since October on foot of your TAR report and further emerging plans in this regard.

This correspondence is, of necessity, quite lengthy. I know that you will want to understand where we are at with regard to the proposed intervention at LUH by the team from Scotland. I trust this will be clear from my correspondence but if for any reason it is not, or indeed, if you have any questions relating to this matter, please contact me and I will be happy to be of assistance.

The 'Price Review' which was published by the Saolta University Healthcare Group in August 2020, was commissioned following concerns regarding patient care at LUH which related to delays in diagnosing cancer of the endometrium. The review made 6 Key recommendations and the Saolta Group developed an action plan aimed at implementing these recommendations. Appropriate oversight of the implementation of the identified actions was provided at hospital, group and national levels. A special measures team was installed at LUH to support the work of the local team of implementing this action plan in full.

In April 2021, the Saolta University Healthcare Group was notified by HIQA of its intention to conduct a Targeted Assurance Review at LUH, which aimed to establish the extent to which the actions from the Price recommendations had been implemented. The outcome of this assurance review was that while most of the agreed actions had been completed a small number remained outstanding. In addition, the TAR also raised significant questions relating to governance at hospital and group levels.

Immediate steps were taken to put in place enhanced levels of oversight and enhanced governance and support for LUH

## **Enhanced Oversight**

The Saolta Managed Clinical and Academic Network (MCAN) for Women's and Children's services continued to oversee the implementation of the Price review Action Plan.

In addition to this, the MCAN oversaw the implementation of a monthly audit at LUH of all OPD referrals to ensure that they were being processed through the correct pathway. Formal reporting of the outcome of these audits continues to demonstrate compliance with appropriate pathways. The purpose of these additional arrangements was to provide assurance that the recommendations of the Price review were being implemented fully.

## **Enhanced Governance and Support**

Additional on-site support was provided on a visiting basis to the Local Management Team via scheduled monthly visits by the Hospital Group CEO, the Hospital Group COO and the Hospital Group CDONM. In addition, onsite support was provided on a visiting basis by Saolta Clinical Directors and the MCAN Team. The Saolta Group Unscheduled Care Lead and the Saolta Group Scheduled care lead provided additional support to LUH.

A robust Performance Management Process for all Hospitals including LUH, was introduced in April 2021 to run on a bimonthly basis, aligned to the National Director of Acute Operations Performance Meetings. In line with the HSE performance and accountability framework, four key themes underpin the performance management process.

- Access to and integration of services
- Quality and Safety of services
- Financial, Governance and compliance requirements
- Actively harnessing the efforts of our workforce.

The process is informed by a comprehensive performance dashboard, which can be accessed and reviewed by all members of the executive team. Meetings are chaired by myself and are led by an agreed agenda. There is a focus on data trends with an identified executive leading each agenda item.

Additional service support in the management of Covid was provided throughout 2021.

Executive Coaching was provided to four members of the senior team at LUH in recognition of the difficult and complex circumstances that they were managing.

These additional supports were intended to give ongoing assurance with regard to the safety of the Gynae service at LUH while also providing general support to the hospital in the context of significant service demands.

In addition to the above, the Saolta Group engaged with a team from NHS Scotland in June 2021 to look at a programme of supports for LUH that would lead to medium to long-term benefits for the hospital. This engagement resulted in the receipt of a draft proposal in August 2021. At that same time, the Covid 19 position in Scotland had begun to deteriorate and was also starting to change in Ireland. It was clear that the Scottish team would not be in a position to engage in the proposed piece of work at that time and it was agreed that to review the position at the end of October. Following review at the end of October a scaled back proposal as an initial step was agreed and further engagement with the Scottish team continued up to Christmas.

At the end of 2021, the Saolta group examined again the recommendations of the Price review, the report of the HIQA TAR and 6 other individual reviews which predated the Price Review, relating to LUH. The purpose of this examination was to see if there were common themes emerging.

Two themes emerged strongly from this examination; Governance and Communication. It was clear that these were hospital wide issues and were not just confined to the Gynae service. It was agreed that a systematic change management programme would be required at the hospital to support the development of enhanced governance and communication arrangements. It was also agreed that the governance arrangements between the Saolta Group and LUH needed to be encompassed in this process.

In January 2022, the Saolta Group sought formal expressions of interest from 3 Professional Consultancy firms for the provision of support to start this process. Given the scale of the work involved, it was necessary to procure this support in phases. The first phase will be the provision of external support to develop a shared Mission and Vision for the hospital. This will be developed jointly between the Saolta Group and LUH. EY Consultancy have been appointed to support this initial piece of work.

We are also tendering for further supports to deliver a change management programme aimed at ensuring the effectiveness and operation of the existing governance arrangements at the hospital and between the hospital and the Saolta Group. This change management programme will also focus on communications within the hospital and more broadly. This procurement process is expected to be completed before the end of March.

Recruitment of medical staff, particularly consultant staff, to specific specialties remains a fundamental concern. It is not expected that this initial change management plan will resolve these difficulties. It is anticipated that this phase will result in a platform upon which further work will take place, leading to a whole hospital/ whole group approach to the difficulties of recruiting to key clinical positions in a geographically isolated model 3 hospital.

### **Plan Summary**

The plan we are implementing with LUH involves:

1. The ongoing provision of enhanced oversight to ensure the completion of all actions relating to the Price Review and the ongoing safety of the Gynae service at LUH. This enhanced oversight is provided via the Women and Children's MCAN. In addition to ongoing management of KPIs, this oversight continues to include monthly audit of Outpatient referrals. The MCAN and site report to the Saolta executive on these processes at the monthly MCAN and Site performance meetings. The Saolta Group report on same to the National Director of Acute Hospitals at monthly performance meetings.
2. Enhanced Governance and Support continues to be provided via onsite support from the HG CEO, COO and CDONM. Additional support will continue to be provided to the hospital by the Group Scheduled Care and Unscheduled Care leads and by the Clinical Directors for Cancer, Medicine, Laboratory and Perioperative care. A programme of executive coaching will continue to be provided to 4 members of the senior management team.
3. A Change Management programme focussing firstly on Vision and Mission and then progressing to Governance and Communication has commenced.

## **Current Assurance**

The Saolta Group remains substantially assured with regard to the safety of the Gynae service at LUH. This assurance is supported by the very significantly reduced numbers of patients waiting to be seen at OP or awaiting procedures. This assurance is also supported by the ongoing monthly audit of out patient referrals. The ongoing safety of the service is dependent on the ability to recruit permanent consultants to the service. While a recruitment process is ongoing, two permanent vacancies remain to be filled.

The Saolta Group remains assured that appropriate processes are in place for the identification, reporting and examination of incidents as they arise at LUH.

## **Attachments**

I have attached a number of documents for your attention. The first is a Summary Progress report relating to the implementation of the recommendations of the Price Review. The summary is structured in accordance with the 6 recommendations. In addition, I have provided an updated action log outlining the progress against all of the actions identified in respect of the Price recommendations.

Please also find attached the Saolta University Healthcare Group/ Letterkenny University Hospital Work plan. This document outlines work that was completed in the final quarter of 2021. It also includes details of the Change Management programme that has commenced at LUH and will run for the coming weeks.

It is my intention to provide you with a further progress update before the middle of this year, however, as outlined earlier, I am happy to deal with any queries that you may have in this matter at any time.

Yours sincerely,



**Antóin O Ceannabháin/ Tony Canavan**

**Príomhoifigeach Feidhmiúcháin an Ghrúpa/ Group Chief Executive Officer  
Grúpa Ollscoile um Chúram Sláinte Saolta/ Saolta University Health Care Group**