

General comments

Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT), the cross border Health and Social Care Partnership operating in the Ireland / Northern Ireland border region, welcomes the opportunity make a submission to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA).

The focus of this CAWT Partnership submission is on how cross border health and social care can support and add value to the development of the border region of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The CAWT partners believe there is merit in focusing on the wider cross border territory and also on the more local cross border regions in order to achieve a more competitive area, both economically and socially.

In particular, the CAWT Partnership acknowledges the approach taken by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly *'in 'connecting' the strengths of the wider region by applying the principles of regional development to the various communities and sub-regions contained within the region, which will therefore result in economic and spatial strategies which differ from one sub-region to another.'* It is also noted the reference to engaging with Northern Ireland in the consultation document: *'Whilst each of the three regional assembly areas is distinct, we do not operate in isolation from each other and there are many complementing and connecting assets shared between regions. For both the Eastern and Midland and the Northern and Western Regions, interaction with Northern Ireland is a critical consideration.*' Clearly as a cross border partnership, CAWT welcomes this statement of commitment to a cross jurisdictional approach. The CAWT Partnership believes that such an approach should focus on the needs of communities and local populations as a priority.

It is also noted and welcomed that *'The Assembly will listen and work with all stakeholders and the community to make sure that growth is aligned with infrastructure and delivered in the right places at the right times...Equally important will be the Assembly's role to focus on supporting and facilitating collaborative activities with other partners in our urban centres and wider region. The RSES ultimately will provide the framework for decision-making and resource allocation for the NPF / NDP future activities.'* In referring to the 'wider region' CAWT understands

that this also includes the border region of Northern Ireland as highlighted in the consultation document throughout.

On a general note, the CAWT Partnership endeavours to keep local authorities / councils up-to-date in relation to cross border health and social care activity on an on-going basis. Typically this will involve CAWT representatives presenting to individual local authorities and also the cross border local authority structures, as and when invited. Additionally, the CAWT Development Centre issues regular communications, including newsletters and annual progress reports which detail the work of the CAWT Partnership and the individual cross border projects/services in development. Furthermore, CAWT manages a website and social media accounts which highlight developments and milestones in relation to cross border health and social care activity underway.

CAWT cross border Health and Social Care

The Northern and Western Regional Assembly territory includes a large part of the region covered by the CAWT Partnership whose members are the HSE in the Republic of Ireland and the Southern and Western Health and Social Care Trusts, the Public Health Agency and the Health and Social Care Board in Northern Ireland. The CAWT Partnership spans the entire border region, accounts for twenty five percent of the total area of the island of Ireland and has a population of 1.6 million.

The CAWT Partnership was established with the signing of the Ballyconnell Agreement in 1992 in order to pursue opportunities for co-operation by looking beyond the individual partner boundaries when planning and providing services and by offering direct support and encouragement to work being undertaken on a cross border basis. Through the CAWT Partnership, the statutory health and social care services in both jurisdictions in the border region have been working together to provide practical solutions to the health and social care needs of local populations since 1992 across the entire border region of Ireland / Northern Ireland. By bringing all the players together, the CAWT partners have been able to pursue a co-ordinated and strategic focus ensuring work undertaken complements national Government and Health Department priorities. Therefore cross border health and social care activity is driven by the needs of the region and the health priorities and has all the

key players engaged. In furtherance of its aims to improve health and social well-being on a cross border basis, the CAWT partner organisations sought to avail of the opportunities for joint working and additional financial assistance from the European Union and other sources.

Over the past 27 years, there has been significant progress made in both the quantity and impact of cross border health and social care activity and collaboration.

For example two significant INTERREG funding programmes (IIIA and IVA) have been implemented consecutively since 2003. Both programmes included a cross border health theme. In the 2003 to 2008 period of the INTERREG IIIA programme, a total of €10.45 million was invested in cross border health via the CAWT Partnership. Within the same timeframe, a further €1.57 million of PEACE II monies was allocated to the CAWT Partnership for cross border activity.

In the 2009 to 2015 period of the INTERREG IVA programme, €30 million was allocated to the CAWT Partnership for cross border health and social care initiatives. Indeed many of these services have been mainstreamed after the EU funding period, so have justified their initial investment.

Most recently, the CAWT Partnership has secured EU INTERREG VA grant funding up to 2021 for four large scale cross border health and social care projects and a fifth Scottish-led project with CAWT as a partner, with a combined total value of €35 million. Both the UK and RoI Governments have agreed to underwrite the EU funding allocated, to ensure such projects are implemented within the full timescale as planned.

The CAWT Partnership has evolved from an informal arrangement into an effective cross border delivery and implementation structure for the partner organisations. The CAWT Partnership is committed to supporting the change agenda in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Health and social care developments, policies and plans at national level will continue to provide direction for future activities. CAWT will also continue to create ideas and pursue opportunities to support these policies through cross border initiatives.

It must be noted that the experience of cross border joint activity has led to a shared sense of identity and purpose between health and social care personnel on both sides of the border. We now have strong relationships and networks developed which will enable us to continue to implement new, value added cross border projects and services.

CAWT Strategic Goals

The CAWT partners are working within a cross border strategy for the 2014 to 2022 period with the following strategic goals:

- ◆ Create opportunities for alternative, added value approaches to health and social care service delivery by facilitating people from both jurisdictions to collaborate, share ideas and develop practical solutions to common health challenges.
- ◆ Identify solutions to barriers to the cross border mobility of patients and professionals.
- ◆ Actively pursue strategic alliances with both internal health and social care partners and external agencies and groups in order to support the delivery of creative and innovative solutions to current and emerging health and social care challenges.
- ◆ Provide comprehensive intelligence and facilitate sharing of data and information on cross border health and wellbeing.
- ◆ Increase usage of technology within health and social care to improve care and enable better access to services.
- ◆ Engage with and positively influence policymakers and other key stakeholders in relation to the development and direction of cross border health and social care.
- ◆ Embed cross border planning and implementation in core activities, where more efficient and cost effective to do so.

The CAWT Partnership would be happy to engage with the NWRA to consider how these CAWT Strategic Goals could support and compliment regional spatial and economic strategies.

Comment on National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs)

One of the National Planning Framework's 10 National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) is *'Improving access to quality education and health and childcare services.'* As all of the CAWT partner organisations have as their primary aim the improvement of health and social well-being of their resident populations, this common objective provides opportunity for collaborative and complimentary approaches and actions.

Indeed, there are many stakeholders involved in cross border and all-island health and social care including both Departments of Health in Ireland and Northern Ireland, the North South Ministerial Council, the Health and Social Care Commissioning and Delivery Agencies in both jurisdictions - this includes the Health and Social Care Board, the Public Health Agency, the various Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland and the HSE in the Republic of Ireland (RoI). Notably missing from this NWRA consultation is reference to some of the major cross-border / all-island developments in health and social care in recent years. Examples include:

- All-island Paediatric Cardiology services.
- North West Cancer Centre at Altnagelvin Area Hospital in Derry/Londonderry treating patients on both sides of the border.
- Cross border Percutaneous Coronary Intervention service (collaboration between HSE Donegal and the Western Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland).
- Cross border GP Out of Hours services operating from South Armagh (NI) to Castleblayney in Co. Monaghan (RoI) and Inishowen, Co Donegal (RoI) to Derry City (NI) (Was initially a CAWT EU funded project).
- Cross border ENT between the RoI's Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland which enables patients from the border counties of Monaghan, Cavan and Louth to access ENT services. (Was initially a CAWT EU funded project).
- There is a cross border indemnity agreement in place which allows health and social care employees to work in both jurisdictions within a range of contexts described within the agreement, such as in the event of a Major Incident.

- A cross-border protocol exists between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland for the two ambulance services to support each other during major emergencies and provide 'mutual aid.'

Section 7.5 Healthy Places includes reference to key Government and Departmental and HSE policies / priorities such as Slainte Care, Primary Care development, Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity plan. Such policies and priorities are mirrored in Northern Ireland and have the potential for even further joint action and approaches. Certainly, the challenges of designing and supporting communities to encourage physical activity and enabling people to make healthy choices and live healthier lives, is common to both jurisdictions and could benefit from collaborative cross border action in local cross border communities.

Health and Social Care Challenges

Health and Social Care is facing similar challenges in both jurisdictions including financial constraints and changing demographics – the population is growing and ageing, and there is an increasing prevalence of chronic diseases. Both health systems are undergoing reform of services to ensure value for money and to be able to deliver quality health and social care in the future. In Northern Ireland, 'Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together' report clearly articulates the challenges facing the health sector and the need for change. Similarly in the Republic of Ireland, the Sláintecare Implementation Strategy which is the Government's plan for delivering a sustainable and equitable health and social care service, lays out the direction for the next ten years. In both jurisdictions, there is now greater emphasis on ill health prevention and early intervention with more care provided closer to home at community or home level and making better use of technology to underpin this. Tackling social exclusion and health inequalities is a common objective across the island of Ireland.

The CAWT partners are committed to working with the Departments of Health, Health Agencies and other stakeholders in facilitating and implementing cross border initiatives for the benefit of patients and clients in the wider border region, which includes the Northern and Western Regional Assembly area.

Impact of CAWT's activity in the Northern and Western Regional Assembly territory

The CAWT Partnership, due to its remit and programme of work, has improved access to health services and enhanced the care for those people living within the border corridor of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Furthermore, resources and expertise are now being shared for the benefit of the border population.

In addition to having played a significant role in developing many of the now mainstream cross border services described earlier, CAWT is currently delivering four large scale EU INTERREG VA projects and a fifth Scottish-led project within the border region. The projects are: Multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences Project (Children's Services), Acute Hospitals Services Project, Innovation Recovery Project (Mental Health) Community Health Sync Project (Population Health) and the Scottish-led mPower Project (Primary Care and Older People).

The CAWT Partnership has a proven track record in managing multi-layered, complex cross border health and social care projects and overcoming professional, legislative and administrative challenges due to the existence of the border. This has led to CAWT undertaking cross border work directly commissioned by the Departments of Health in both jurisdictions and also by the CAWT partner organisations.

CAWT has established a reputation for effective partnership working with the Community and Voluntary sector. CAWT is committed, under the INTERREG VA programme, to building upon the previous INTERREG IVA programme in which up to 50 Community and Voluntary organisations were partners with CAWT in the delivery of specific projects in the areas of social inclusion, childhood obesity, alcohol abuse prevention, services to people with disabilities, support to older people and inclusion initiatives for young people with autism.

In addition to bringing quality health and social care services to more rural and isolated border regions, there is an economic impact to CAWT's work, with EU

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funding in particular, creating jobs which has a positive multiplier effect on local economies.

In conclusion the CAWT partners are pleased to be afforded this opportunity to input to the development of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) area and will engage with and support the NWRA in relation to their aim of *'through partnership and collaboration, champion the development of a number of these strategies and action plans [covering many of the region's sectors, county's / city and areas of work] but also be willing leaders in the delivery of regionally significant projects.'*

Attachments

CAWT Annual Progress Report 2017

CAWT in Action newsletter – autumn 2018