

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH

Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

Councillor Cathal Mallaghan
Mid Ulster District Council

Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 9052 2556
Email: private.office@health-ni.gov.uk

Your Ref: C015/21

Our Ref: CORR-0513-2021

Date: 17 February 2021

Dear *Cathal,*

Thank you for your correspondence of 3 February 2021 in which you advised of the Motion carried by the Mid Ulster District Council in relation to the care provided by hospices and hospice staff and which called for fair and transparent funding in line with demand and continued high quality palliative and end of life care.

I appreciate that hospices in Northern Ireland provide much valued services in caring for those living with palliative and end of life care needs. Departmental officials and their colleagues in the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) work closely with hospices and are aware of both the contribution they make and the challenges they face.

I recognise the financial pressure facing hospices. Unfortunately COVID-19 has impacted across the voluntary and community sector and there are similar issues across other areas and organisations also where there are increasing demands for services and financial pressures arising from this.

The Health and Social Care Board has Service Level Agreements in place with each of the hospice providers in Northern Ireland for both inpatient and community based services. Separate arrangements are also in place with HSC Trusts for hospice nurse night sitting services as required. In addition, Marie Curie also provides a regional out of hours Rapid Response Service.

Funding guidance put in place by the Department in 2004 introduced 50/50 funding for agreed adult inpatient hospice services with effect from 2004/05 and 50% funding for agreed adult community services with effect from 2005/06. These arrangements provide for funding of agreed commissioned services costs, not a hospice's total running costs.

Children's hospice services are funded differently to adult services and separate commissioning and funding arrangements are in place with the Northern Ireland Hospice for children's palliative care and hospice services.

In addition to core funding, following the closure of the Horizon West children's hospice, my Department agreed to fund an additional bed at the NI Children's Hospice at Horizon House for 3 years from 2018/19 on a 50:50 basis.

Since 2018, a Paediatric and Life Limited Service (PALLs) has been commissioned from the NI Children's Hospice. The service provides a specialist nursing role to support children, families and clinicians in recognising and managing end of life needs as well as access to a dedicated bed in the NI Children's Hospice or in the child's own home. The funding of £186,000 for the PALLs service was made available initially through Confidence and Supply transformation funding. My Department has made this funding available for a further year in 2020/21 to ensure the continued delivery of the service by the NI Children's hospice.

In recognition of challenges faced by hospices during the ongoing pandemic, with the agreement of my Department, the HSCB put arrangements in place to support hospices' cash flow. These arrangements also apply to contracts between the hospices and Health and Social Care Trusts. The Health and Social Care Board has also worked closely with hospices to support the availability of PPE, fit testing and access to sanitising equipment and to keep hospices informed about the broader system approach to responding to COVID-19.

I also welcome the additional funding that has been made available to hospices in recognition of the restrictions on fundraising opportunities and retail as a result of COVID-19. In May 2020, £6.75 million was allocated to local hospices and the Cancer Fund for Children (CFC). On 29 October, additional funding of £7.3million for hospices and the Cancer Fund for Children was announced.

More recently, my Department has made further funding of £1.754million available for hospices as part of additional COVID-19 funding for 2020/21, in recognition of the impact of COVID-19 and the additional costs that hospices face as they have continued to provide palliative and end of life care during the pandemic.

The HSCB has recently completed a review of adult hospice funding, as a result of which a total funding shortfall of £867,360 was identified between the 2019/20 funding provided to hospices when compared against benchmarked costs assessed as part of the review process. This additional funding has been made available to hospices backdated to April 2019.

In October 2020, the Health and Social Care Board approved a 4% uplift for 2020/21 to the value of its core contract Service Level Agreements held with hospices in Northern Ireland.

The current funding arrangements for adult hospices date back to 2004. I believe it is appropriate therefore that consideration be given to reviewing these in light of the changing context and demographics for palliative care and I hope that hospices would engage with this.

New Decade New Approach (NDNA) included a commitment to increase investment in palliative and end of life care to fully implement service improvements for palliative and end of life care including enhancing the contribution of hospices; and to increase support for palliative perinatal care. Investment to meet the NDNA palliative care commitment was included in my Department's bids for additional funding in the Department of Finance Budget 2021-22 Exercise. Unfortunately my Department's Draft Budget allocation hasn't provided specific allocations to take forward any of our NDNA commitments including palliative care. My Department is currently considering whether some of our NDNA priorities including palliative care could be funded from the funding that is available for the COVID/ Rebuild of services.

I trust this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robin Swann', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health

From the Minister of Finance

Cllr Cathal Mallaghan

Philip.Moffett@midulstercouncil.org

Private Office
2nd Floor
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
BELFAST
BT3 9ED
Tel: 028 9081 6216
Email: private.office@finance-ni.gov.uk

Your reference: C036-21
Our reference: CORR-0639-2021

Date: 02 April 2021

Dear Cathal

MOTION CARRIED BY COUNCIL ON VACANT RATES ON TOWN CENTRE RETAIL PREMISES

Thank you for your letter of 16 March regarding vacant rating policy and requesting that further assistance be provided to vacant retail premises within town centres for the next financial year.

The general policy in regard to vacant premises provides that once a non-domestic property becomes vacant, it receives 100% exemption from business rates for the first three months of that vacant period, after which the vacant empty premises relief of 50% of the occupied rate will be applied. The funding for this relief, which costs approximately £43m in revenue foregone per year, is shared between the Executive and District Councils.

In response to the difficulties facing our town centres and village streets due to the pandemic, in the 2020/21 rating year I provided a 12 months rates holiday which provided £288m of support for businesses; this applied to both occupied and vacant retail units. In other words, vacant retail units were not charged any rates in 2020-21. As the cost of this additional relief was funded entirely by the Executive, this did not impact on council revenues, reflecting also our determination to protect livelihoods and jobs.

In relation to the forthcoming rating year, you will already be aware that on 11 March I announced details of a further rate relief package for the forthcoming rating year. This will deliver £230 million of support to almost 29,000 businesses here in the form of a rate free period for the next 12 months from 1 April 2021. My officials are

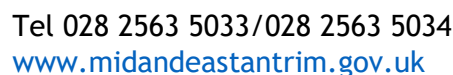
currently working to bring forward Statutory Regulations which will provide details of this relief to specified businesses uses in the retail, hospitality, leisure, tourism, childcare and manufacturing sectors, as well as airports and newspaper production facilities. Similar to last year, I can confirm that the cost of this support will be funded entirely by the Executive and will result in eligible vacant retail premises paying no rates for a further 12 months.

I trust you find this response helpful.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Conor Murphy." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

CONOR MURPHY MLA
MINISTER OF FINANCE



Ref: TC/ab/KM

29 March 2021

Sent via email: private.office@education-ni.gov.uk

Mr Peter Weir, MLA
Education Minister
Rathgael house
Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

Dear Minister Weir

Re: Holiday Hunger

At the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council meeting on 09 February 2021, a Notice of Motion was passed and unanimously supported by Council regarding Holiday Hunger as proposed by Ald Billy Ashe MBE and Seconded by Ald Beth Adger MBE:

“Following my notice of motion dated 03 September 2019 that was unanimously supported by Council on summer hunger for children, and the sterling work by Manchester United Football star Marcus Rashford, I noticed that other regions within the UK have moved on this issue. This council should write to the Education Minister and invite other councils to write in support of implementing free school meals during summer holidays for those entitled to ensure no child goes hungry and is given the best start on life and help raise our young people and make happy teenagers.”

The eradication of Holiday Hunger has been an issue which this Council has actively pursued over the last couple of years. In 2018, Council approved a Notice of Motion to tackle this issue in which Council resolved to work with statutory and voluntary agencies to bring forth a solution to holiday hunger.

Council was delighted to hear your announcement in November 2020, that families of young people who are entitled to Free School Meals will receive food grants during school holidays, from Christmas 2020 until Easter 2022. This is reassuring news for the increasing number of families who find themselves in food poverty in our Borough. In the short term it will alleviate some of their hardship and help ensure that no child goes hungry and is given the best start in life.

Please reply to:

■ **Head Office**
The Braid
1-29 Bridge Street
Ballymena BT43 5EJ

□ **Ballymena Office**
Ardeevin
80 Galgorm Road
Ballymena BT42 1AB

□ **Carrickfergus Office**
Museum & Civic Centre
11 Antrim Street
Carrickfergus BT38 7DG

□ **Larne Office**
Smiley Buildings
Victoria Road
Larne BT40 1RU

□ **Planning Office**
Business Park
190 Raceview Road
Ballymena
BT42 4HZ

Chief Executive
Anne Donaghy OBE

Easter 2022 is only 12 months away and I am writing to you as Minister for Education, to ask you to support the continuation of food grants during holiday periods beyond this timescale or to develop and implement a new initiative to address the growing issues of Holiday Hunger. You have previously stated that *“access to a healthy nutritious meal should be a basic right for all children”* and our Council unanimously agree with you. It is therefore vital that this support is continued to ensure children and young people return to school after holiday periods, healthy and ready to learn.

Research highlights the correlation between good nourishment and a child’s ability to learn. Children who are malnourished fall behind in school because they cannot concentrate or they often miss classes to help the family put food on the table. Food poverty will not simply disappear in 12 months, therefore it is essential that action is taken now to address the issue of holiday hunger in the longer term.

Council would be keen to meet with you to assist in any interagency approach or initiative that you can develop in order to ensure no young person in our Borough goes hungry during school holiday breaks.

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely



Anne Donaghy OBE
Clerk & Chief Executive

Please reply to:

■ **Head Office**
The Braid
1-29 Bridge Street
Ballymena BT43 5EJ

□ **Ballymena Office**
Ardeevin
80 Galgorm Road
Ballymena BT42 1AB

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Victoria Road
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190 Raceview Road
Ballymena
BT42 4HZ

Chief Executive
Anne Donaghy OBE



Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin Monaghan County Council

Appendix D

6th April, 2021

The Elected Members of
Each Borough Council, City Council
and District Council in
Northern Ireland.

Dear Councillor,

At the March meeting of Monaghan County Council the following resolution was passed and I was directed to circulate it to all local authorities north and south of the border seeking their support and adoption.

That this Council records it's support for the World Health Organisation's plea for the equitable global distribution of all vaccines, treatments and therapies developed to combat the coronavirus scourge, and further notes:

- *that some 130 countries across the world have yet to receive a single vaccine;*
- *that some countries have made arrangements for the delivery of vaccines far in excess of their populations need;*
- *that multiple voices have raised concern that some of the world's poorest countries are unlikely to receive an adequate delivery of vaccines to meet their populations need until late 2023 or even into 2024;*
- *the failure of the pharmaceutical companies behind the current batch of developed vaccines to share their research and findings with equally competent pharmaceutical manufacturers across the world to help speed up the production and distribution of vaccines and thereby the defeat of this global pandemic;*
- *the European Commission's approval of an application by concerned citizens to secure one million signatures of EU citizens to compel the Commission to consider the steps it can take, including legislation, to address this global inequality;*

That this Council encourages all citizens to sign the EU hosted petition through Google Chrome on www.noprofitonpandemic.eu thereby helping to reach the one million signatures target at the earliest date possible.

Yours faithfully,

Carmel Thornton
Meetings Administrator

Fáltaíonn an tUdarás Áitiúil roimh chomhfhreagras i nGaeilge.

Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin, Oifigí an Chontae, An Gleann, Muineachán, Éire.

Monaghan County Council, Council Offices, The Glen, Monaghan, Ireland.

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✉ eolas@monaghancoco.ie info@monaghancoco.ie

Acmhainní Daonna
Human Resources
047 30586

Airgeadas
Finance
047 30589

Na Bóithre
Roads
047 30597

Clár na dToghthóirí
Register of Electors
047 30551

Comhshaol
Environment
042 9661240

Na hEalaíona
Arts
047 38162

Iasachtaí /Deontais Tithíochta
Housing Loans/Grants
047 30527

Leabharlann an Chontae
County Library
047 74700

Mótarcháin
Motor Tax
047 81175

Músaem an Chontae
County Museum
047 82928

Pleanáil
Planning
047 30532

Pobal
Community
047 73719

Rialú Dóiteáin/Foirgnimh
Fire/Building Control
047 30521

Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office
047 71818

Seirbhís Uisce
Water Services
047 30504/30571

From the Minister of Finance



Cllr Cathal Mallaghan

*Chair
Mid Ulster District Council
Circular Road
Dungannon
BT71 6DT*

Private Office
2nd Floor
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
BELFAST
BT3 9ED
Tel: 028 9081 6216
Email: private.office@finance-ni.gov.uk

Your reference:
Our reference: **CORR-0671-2021**

Date: **29 March 2021**

Dear Councillor Mallaghan,

Connect2 Hubs

Thank you for your correspondence of 23 March 2021 on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council in relation to Connect2 regional hubs. I have read your letter and I understand that Council is disappointed that there are no current plans to locate a Connect2 within the Mid Ulster region.

Whilst I am mindful of the deleterious impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Mid Ulster area, it is important to highlight that the Connect2 hubs will not lead to the redeployment of Civil Service jobs. Rather, the hubs are intended to provide an alternative location for existing NICS staff to work without the need to travel longer distances.

My officials determined the optimal locations of the Connect2 regional hubs based on NICS staff commuter data analysis provided by Ordnance Survey NI, geographical location, and the Department of Finance's existing office portfolio. They will continue to review the data to ensure that hubs are located in areas that maximise their impact, best meet departmental needs and ensure best value for money to the public purse. As the hubs develop in the future, I have asked them to keep the properties detailed in the appendix to your letter under consideration.

Derek Kennedy is the Senior Responsible Owner of the Reform of Property Management Programme and is leading on Connect2 project delivery. I understand that Derek discussed the Connect2 hubs with Council Officer Paul McCready on 23 March. Derek is also meeting with your Chief Executive, Adrian McCreesh, on 30 March to discuss the hubs and the wider plans for central government's office estate and how we might work together to maximise the impact of the central government estate in the Mid Ulster Council area.

My Department is committed to exploring opportunities to work alongside you to maximise local regeneration and redress regional imbalance.

Is mise le meas

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Conor Murphy." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

CONOR MURPHY MLA
MINISTER OF FINANCE

Correspondence from - Northern Ireland Official, University & College Union (NI)

Appendix F

From: Katharine Clarke
Sent: 12 April 2021 09:55
To: Eileen Forde <Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org>
Subject: RE: FE Lecturers Pay Claim

Good Morning Eileen

Please extend the UCU's thanks and appreciation to the Council for their support. I will share the correspondence with members.

Kind regards

Katharine

From: Eileen Forde [<mailto:Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org>]
Sent: 08 April 2021 10:56
To: Katharine Clarke
Subject: FE Lecturers Pay Claim

Good morning

Please find attached correspondence from Mid Ulster District Council for your attention.

Best regards

Eileen Forde

Eileen Forde
Member Support Officer
Dungannon Office
Telephone 03000 132 132 Ext 24004
Mobile: 07825140198



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council



Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health and Social Care Trust



Appendix G

Mr Adrian McCreesh
Chief Executive
Mid Ulster District Council
Council Offices
Circular Road
Dungannon
BT71 6DT

Chief Executive's Office
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

Email: michael.bloomfield@nias.hscni.net
Tel: 028 9040 0999

Our Ref: AD/CE/50(1)

Your Ref:

Date: 18 March 2021

Dear Adrian

Thank you for your letter of 26 February 2021 and for the interest that the Council takes in relation to the provision of ambulance services in the area.

I would be very happy to meet with the Council to discuss the issues raised in your letter in more detail. In the meantime, I would comment as follows on the specific issues raised by Council members as outlined in your letter.

New Housing developments and the NIAS Navigation system

New housing developments are captured as part of the Ordnance Survey NI (OSNI) Pointer data set, which are released on a regular basis. The pointer dataset is the foundation of our Gazetteer held within the Computer Aided Dispatch system, which automatically updates the satellite navigation systems in our ambulances.

More generally, on the issue of locating properties, particularly in rural areas, I very much welcome your planned promotional campaign to encourage both houses and lane entrances to be clearly numbered. I believe this is an issue we could work on jointly, and with your agreement, will provide the contact details of our Media and Communications Manager who would lead on this on behalf of NIAS.

Response times

Ambulance response times continue to be challenging, particularly during the Pandemic when a substantial number of staff have been unavailable for work at any time due to Covid-19 related issues such as needing to self-isolate. This has increased our reliance on the need for staff to work overtime to provide as much operational cover as possible. The longer-term solution to this lies in the full implementation of our new Clinical Response Model which would see an expansion in our operational workforce of over 300 staff. We continue to work with the Department of Health to secure funding for this expansion.



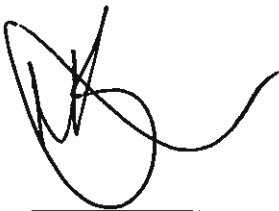
The introduction of our new Clinical Response Model forms part of a wider framework on ongoing service reforms in NIAS. I appreciate your concerns as to how this translates into practice within rural areas and look forward to providing the Council with a full overview as to how each part of our strategy connects to deliver as equitable a service as possible across all areas.

Estates issues

Upgrading our estates to make them fit for purpose and ensuring that they are geographically sited in areas which provide most benefit is a key deliverable of our strategy to transform 2020-2026 – “Caring Today, Planning for Tomorrow”. As such, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the NIAS strategic plans to reconfigure our estate, the impact that these proposals will have on response times and the potential for collaborative work with Mid Ulster Council in the development of these plans.

I look forward to having the opportunity to discuss these issues in more detail with the Council, and would ask your office contacts my PA, Nikki Dornan via email chief.secretary@nias.hscni.net or telephone 028 9040 0712 to arrange a suitable time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Michael Bloomfield', written over a horizontal line.

Michael Bloomfield
CHIEF EXECUTIVE