

## FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Cllr Dominic Molloy  
Chair  
Mid Ulster District Council  
[Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org)

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: COR-1405-2024

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Dear *Dominic,*

Thank you for your email correspondence dated 3 April 2024 regarding the Mid Ulster District Council's concerns regarding respite provision for adults with a learning disability, complex needs and challenging behaviour. Officials from my Department (DoH), have been in contact with officials in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust to address the queries and issues noted in your correspondence.

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust have advised that it currently commissions 23 short break beds across the Trust area. These beds are registered with RQIA as either residential (9) or nursing (14).

In addition to bed based short breaks the Trust provides short breaks to families through other types of service provision – Domiciliary Care sitting service, short breaks direct payment, flexible short break direct payment and Shared Care short breaks (with a host family).

Of the 23 short break beds across the Trust 11 are located in Dungannon – Woodlawn House (8), Dungannon Care Home (2) and The Haven (1). These three services are registered as Nursing Care for those with a Learning Disability / Learning Disability over 65 years of age.

Both Dungannon Care Home and Woodlawn House provide short breaks for those with complex needs and challenging behaviour. These services also provide short breaks to individuals with complex physical healthcare needs who may not have complex behaviours.

In April 2023 The Haven decided to reduce their contracted short break beds with the SHSCT from 3 to 1 resulting in a reduction in short break beds in the area. The Trust continues to work to develop bed based short break options across the Trust area within the funding available to it.

Woodlawn House short break service was temporarily suspended mid-December 2023 to respond to an unforeseen crisis in the community – however by January 2024 this service became fully operational again.

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust has advised that it recognises the importance of regular short break service provision for families and recognises that families value these services highly. The Southern Health and Social Care Trust also recognises the limitations of existing resources and how demand / need can often outweigh capacity.

Further investment for short breaks would enable the Trust to increase access to this important service. Families, parents/carers and service users continue to emphasise the need for a range of day opportunities, day care, respite/short break services. Trusts are now delivering this via the mechanisms noted above.

Across all Trusts, short breaks provision has been identified as an area of increasing need with demand extending beyond the existing capacity within relevant facilities. These pressures have been raised with the Department's 'Strategic Planning and Performance Group' (SPPG) as one of a number of commissioning priorities within the Learning Disability programme of care.

Throughout 2023, the DoH has led on an exercise to finalise a draft service model for learning disability, which includes several outcomes and actions to expand day services and short breaks in Northern Ireland. The current draft has been shared with key stakeholders to inform the next phase of this work and wider consultation.

In parallel to this work, the Department's Strategic Planning and Performance Group are working closely with Trusts to undertake a financial review of adult learning disability services. The outputs of this work will inform decisions on the service model and long-term planning for learning disability services to support individuals with a learning disability, their parents, families and carers.

I trust this correspondence addresses the issues raised in your correspondence.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robin Swann', is positioned above the printed name.

**Robin Swann MLA**  
**Minister of Health**



**Level 9  
Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7EG**

Your ref: C061/24

Telephone: (028) 90582 3346  
e-mail: [anthonycarleton@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:anthonycarleton@communities-ni.gov.uk)  
Our ref: TOF 1277 2024  
Date: 25 April 2024

Councillor Dominic Molloy  
Chair  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Dungannon Council Office  
Circular Road  
Dungannon  
BT71 6DT

Via email: [Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org)

Dear Dominic,

### **COUNCIL REMOTE/HYBRID MEETINGS**

Thank you for your letter of 10 April 2024 to Minister Lyons. The Minister has asked that I provide a response on his behalf.

The Minister is committed to giving councils the flexibility to hold remote/hybrid meetings and intends to bring forward regulations, within as short a timeframe as possible, using enabling powers in the Local Government (Meetings and Performance) Act (NI) 2021.

As noted in your correspondence, a letter was issued to all council Chief Executives with a draft of the regulations on 12 March and responses about the draft regulations have been received from a number of councils. Departmental officials will continue to engage and update councils on this matter whilst the regulations are being progressed.



Department for  
**Communities**  
[www.communities-ni.gov.uk](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk)

An Roinn  
**Pobal**

Department for  
**Commonities**

Yours sincerely,

**Anthony Carleton**  
**Director**  
**Local Government & Housing Regulation**



Mayor / Méara  
Councillor / An Comhairleoir  
Patricia Logue

Our Ref: TJ/C216/24

9 May 2024

Dear Chief Executive

At a Meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council held on 24 April 2024, the following Motion was passed:

**That this Council acknowledges the unacceptable waiting times for autism assessments in the North of Ireland, causing significant hardship and developmental delays.**

**Council recognises that early intervention is critical for developing key skills in children with autism, yet the backlog hinders timely support, impacting individual potential and straining educational and healthcare services.**

**Council resolve to formally write to the Minister of Education and the Minister for Health to urgently develop and present a comprehensive business case outlining specific, actionable strategies to address and resolve this backlog including a detailed analysis of its impacts, clear reduction targets, proposed measures for ongoing assessments, and the necessary financial and staffing resources.**

**This plan should involve and support families throughout the process.**

**Council demands immediate action and insists on a collaborative effort among the Minister for Health, Minister for Education, and Minister for Finance, together with key stakeholders to develop a detailed report on the business case**

**and action plan, including a clear implementation timeline, within this mandate period to immediately address and resolve the existing backlog.**

**Council will seek collaboration from ALL NI councils to support this call pledging to facilitate and support the development of the business case and action plan.**

I would appreciate your consideration in this important matter and would be grateful for a response at your earliest opportunity.

**Yours Sincerely**



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**Councillor Patricia Logue  
Mayor  
Derry City and Strabane District Council**

**From:** [btp.authorisation.team@bt.com](mailto:btp.authorisation.team@bt.com)  
**To:** [Eileen Forde](#)  
**Cc:** [Emma McCullagh](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Telephone Kiosk  
**Date:** 02 May 2024 13:22:22  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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Good afternoon Eileen ,

Thank you for forwarding on the correspondence.

Since Ofcom has changed their process to remove the last at a site telephone kiosk there is no longer a local veto to object to the removal of a telephone kiosk .

Under the new process Ofcom have decided to put in place strengthened criteria to protect PCBs from removal where they are still needed.

The criteria would protect last at a site# PCBs where:

- they do not have coverage from all four mobile network providers; or
- they are located in an area with a high frequency of accidents or suicides; or
- they have made 52 or more calls over the past 12 months (i.e. the equivalent of one call per week); or
- there is other evidence of a reasonable need for the PCB

#A site is defined as 400 metre walking distance from the next nearest PCB.

We have also received correspondence from the Council via Emma McCullagh ( copied into this email) we will now await a response from the Council before the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024 any representations received should have taken in the new Ofcom removal criteria [Review of the telephony universal service obligation](#).

Best regards

The BT payphones team



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BT Group plc

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Registered in England no: 1800000

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**From:** Eileen Forde <Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 2, 2024 10:40 AM  
**To:** btp authorisation team <btp.authorisation.team@bt.com>  
**Subject:** FW: Telephone Kiosk

You don't often get email from [eileen.forde@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:eileen.forde@midulstercouncil.org). [Learn why this is important](#)

Good morning

Please find attached letter from Council requesting the retention of

*Removal of Public Payphone at BT71 6DN*

*Telephone Number: 02887752153*

*Address: PCO1 Killymerron Park Dungannon*

Best regards

Eileen

**Eileen Forde**  
**Committee & Member Services Manager**  
**Dungannon Office**  
**Telephone 03000 132 132 Ext 24004**  
**Telephone 07825140198**



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