

CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

2 March 2018 – 9 March 2018



Northern Ireland
Assembly

The Northern Ireland Assembly was dissolved at 00:01 on Thursday 26 January 2017.



Tuesday 6 March 2018

Department of Justice and Equality

Declan Breathnach asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality the status of the work of the joint agency task force dealing with cross-Border criminality; the number of initiatives undertaken to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Charles Flanagan: In November 2015, the British and Irish Governments and the Northern Ireland Executive agreed a series of measures in the agreement A Fresh Start, The Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan, as part of a concerted and enhanced effort to tackle organised and cross jurisdictional crime. These measures included the creation of a Joint Agency Task Force.

This Task Force is led by senior officers from An Garda Síochána, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Revenue Commissioners and HM Revenue and Customs. A number of other organisations, including the National Crime Agency and the Criminal Assets Bureau are also involved

in operational activity. The objective of the Task Force is to build on existing law enforcement frameworks and to increase the collective effectiveness of operational law enforcement actions.

The Strategic Oversight Group of the Task Force is chaired jointly at senior management level by the two police services in order to provide strong strategic direction and oversight to front-line operational activities. This group also includes senior revenue and other personnel from relevant agencies.

Following the establishment of the Strategic Oversight Group, a Cross Border Strategic Assessment was conducted with input from the multi-agency partners to review the extent and impact of organised crime.

Senior officers from An Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland jointly chair the Task Force Operations Co-ordination Group which is bringing forward the operation actions in six priority areas that have been the focus of the work of the task force: Rural Crime; Immigration-related Crime; Excise Fraud; Drugs; Financial Crime, and Human Trafficking. These priorities are, of course, kept under review. There has been very considerable operational activity, with a variety of different operations undertaken across all of the priority areas since the establishment of the Task Force.

Under the provisions of the Agreement, a report of the work of the Task Force is provided by the Strategic Oversight Group to the six monthly meetings of Justice Ministers in the framework of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Co-operation on Criminal Justice Matters. Two such reports covering the first twelve months of the operation of the Task Force have been prepared and submitted to the two Justice Ministers over the course of 2016.

While there has been a hiatus in the normal reporting arrangements given the current impasse in the Northern Ireland institutions, the Deputy will be reassured to note that this has not impacted on the operational work of the Task Force which maintains its focus on tackling serious cross-Border crime.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-03-06a.218&s=cross-border+2018-03-02..2018-03-09>

Thursday 8 March 2018

Department of Health

Niamh Smyth asked the Minister for Health if a person can access a drug for their condition; if so, if they will be reimbursed for same; if it can be accessed under the cross-border health directive; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Simon Harris: The [HSE](#) has statutory responsibility for decisions on pricing and reimbursement of medicines under the community drugs schemes, in accordance with the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013.

The [HSE](#) received separate applications for the reimbursement of Nivolumab (Opdivo) for eight separate indications, including for use as a combination therapy in 2017.

In October 2017, Nivolumab was approved by the [HSE](#) for the treatment of:

- melanoma (monotherapy);
- renal cell carcinoma, and
- Hodgkins Lymphoma.

The [HSE](#) decided not to support the use of Nivolumab in the treatment of locally advanced or metastatic non-small cell lung cancer. The [HSE](#) Drugs Group did not consider the evidence for clinical benefit to be sufficiently robust in the context of the proposed price and budget impact.

The company is welcome to submit a new reimbursement application which will be assessed in line with the 2013 Act.

The EU Directive 2011/24/EU on Patients' Rights in Cross Border Healthcare aims to ensure EU citizens may access safe and good quality healthcare services across EU borders. The Directive establishes a framework for cross border healthcare between EU/EEA states to facilitate patients to access care in another Member State in accordance with their entitlements in their own country. Under the Directive, known as the Cross Border Healthcare Directive (CBD), insured patients are entitled to have the costs of cross-border healthcare services reimbursed if the healthcare service in question is among the benefits to which they are entitled in their Member State of affiliation. As such, it allows Irish residents to avail of healthcare in other EU or EEA (excluding Switzerland) Member States that they would be entitled to within the public health system in Ireland, which is not contrary to Irish legislation.

As Nivolumab is not currently available within the public health system in Ireland for use for people with lung cancer, it would not be possible to avail of it abroad under the Cross Border Directive.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-03-08a.978&s=cross-border+2018-03-02..2018-03-09>