



26 May 2025

Coilín O'Reilly
Rural, Community, Culture and Heritage Committee
County and City Management Association

Re: Membership of the Regional Health Forums

Dear Mr O'Reilly,

I am writing to inform you about proposed changes in the number and membership structure of the HSE's Regional Health Forums, following the introduction of the HSE Health Regions.

The four Health Forums were established in 2006 to promote democratic representations and feedback from people on the range and operation of health and personal social services in their area.

As you may be aware, the HSE was restructured into six HSE Health Regions on March 4, 2024. These regions are now responsible for the planning and coordinated delivery of health and social care services within their respective geographies.

In light of the introduction of the new Health Regions, the Department of Health proposes to increase the number of Regional Health Forums from four to six to align with the new Health Region geographies. Consequently, the membership of the Health Forums will need to be aligned to these geographies.

The current structure of the Health Forums reflects the HSE's previous administrative areas:

- Regional Health Forum West
- Regional Health Forum Dublin Mid-Leinster
- Regional Health Forum Dublin North East
- Regional Health Forum South

It is intended that the new structure will reflect the six HSE Health Regions:

- HSE Dublin and North East
- HSE Dublin and Midlands
- HSE Dublin and South East
- HSE Mid West
- HSE South West
- HSE West and North West

The Department of Health undertook an analysis to determine how many councillors, and from which councils, should sit on each Health Forum. The analysis maintained the allocation decisions made when the four forums were first established:



- Each Local Authority is assigned the same number of representatives it had under the previous structure, and
- Each Local Authority has a minimum of three representatives.

To account for population increases, one additional representative was added for every 50,000 increase in population at a Local Authority level between 2002-2022. This results in an increase in Health Forum membership from 148 to 158 nationally. **Appendix A** outlines the membership structure of the new six Health Forums and **Appendix B** outlines the process for allocating the councillors to six Regional Health Forums.

The Department of Health is progressing the necessary legislative changes to the Health Act 2004 to bring these changes into effect. In advance of these changes, the Department has advised the HSE that the six Regional Health Forums should be established on an administrative basis in anticipation of this change.

On the advice of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage we would like to request the support of your organisation in facilitating this change. We ask that you notify each council of their allocation so that the forums can agree these membership arrangements in time for a return to the new structures in September. We understand that the dates for the Health Forum AGMs are:

- RHF South: June 5th
- RHF West: 24th June
- RHF Dublin Midlands: 15th July
- RHF Dublin North East: 28th July

Please don't hesitate to contact myself or my colleague Clare Delargy if you would like to discuss this matter further (Sarah_Treleaven@health.gov.ie , Clare_Delargy@health.gov.ie). We very much appreciate your support in progressing this.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Treleaven
Principal Officer
Sláintecare Regions Unit



Appendix A

HSE Dublin North East	Reps per Local Authority
Cavan County Council	3
Dublin City Council	9
Fingal County Council	8
Louth County Council	4
Meath County Council	6
Monaghan County Council	3
Total	33

HSE Dublin Midlands	Reps per Local Authority
Dublin City Council	5
Kildare County Council	6
Laois County Council	3
Longford County Council	3
Offaly County Council	3
South Dublin County Council	8
Westmeath County Council	3
Wicklow County Council	1
Total	32

HSE Dublin South East	Reps per Local Authority
Carlow County Council	3
Dublin City Council	1
Dun Laoghaire- Rathdown County Council	6
Kilkenny County Council	4
Tipperary County Council	4
Waterford City & County Council	6
Wexford County Council	5
Wicklow County Council	3
Total	32

HSE South West	Reps per Local Authority
Cork City Council	6
Cork County Council	9
Kerry County Council	5
Total	20



HSE Mid West	Reps per Local Authority
Clare County Council	4
Limerick City & County Council	7
Tipperary County Council	3
Total	14

HSE West and North West	Reps per Local Authority
Donegal County Council	5
Galway City Council	3
Galway County Council	6
Leitrim County Council	3
Mayo County Council	4
Roscommon County Council	3
Sligo County Council	3
Total	27



Appendix B – Process for allocating councillors to six Regional Health Forums

Allocating councillors to six Regional Health Forums

To determine the allocation of representatives to the six new forums, the Department of Health took the following approach, also outlined in the graphic:

1. Assign existing representatives of the four Regional Health Forums to the HSE Health Region they now fall into.
2. If a Local Authority is split across a Health Region, assign representatives to Regional Health Forums based on population size that falls into each region.
3. Assign a new representative from a Local Authority for every 50,000 increase in population at a Local Authority level between 2002-2022.¹

Table 1: Allocation of representatives to new forums at Health Region level

Six New Health Forums	Existing Reps (Reassigned)	Extra Rep. for 50k Increase in Local Authority population	Total New Reps	Percentage of all Reps.	Percent of Ireland's population (2022)	2002 Population	2022 Population
HSE Dublin and North East	29	4	33	21%	23%	830,110	1,187,082
HSE Dublin and Midlands	30	2	32	20%	21%	805,093	1,077,639
HSE Dublin and South East	31	1	32	20%	19%	759,348	971,093
HSE South West	18	2	20	13%	14%	580,356	740,614
HSE Midwest	14	0	14	9%	8%	339,591	413,059
HSE West and North West	26	1	27	17%	15%	602,705	759,652
Grand Total	148	10	158	100%	100%	3,917,203	5,149,139

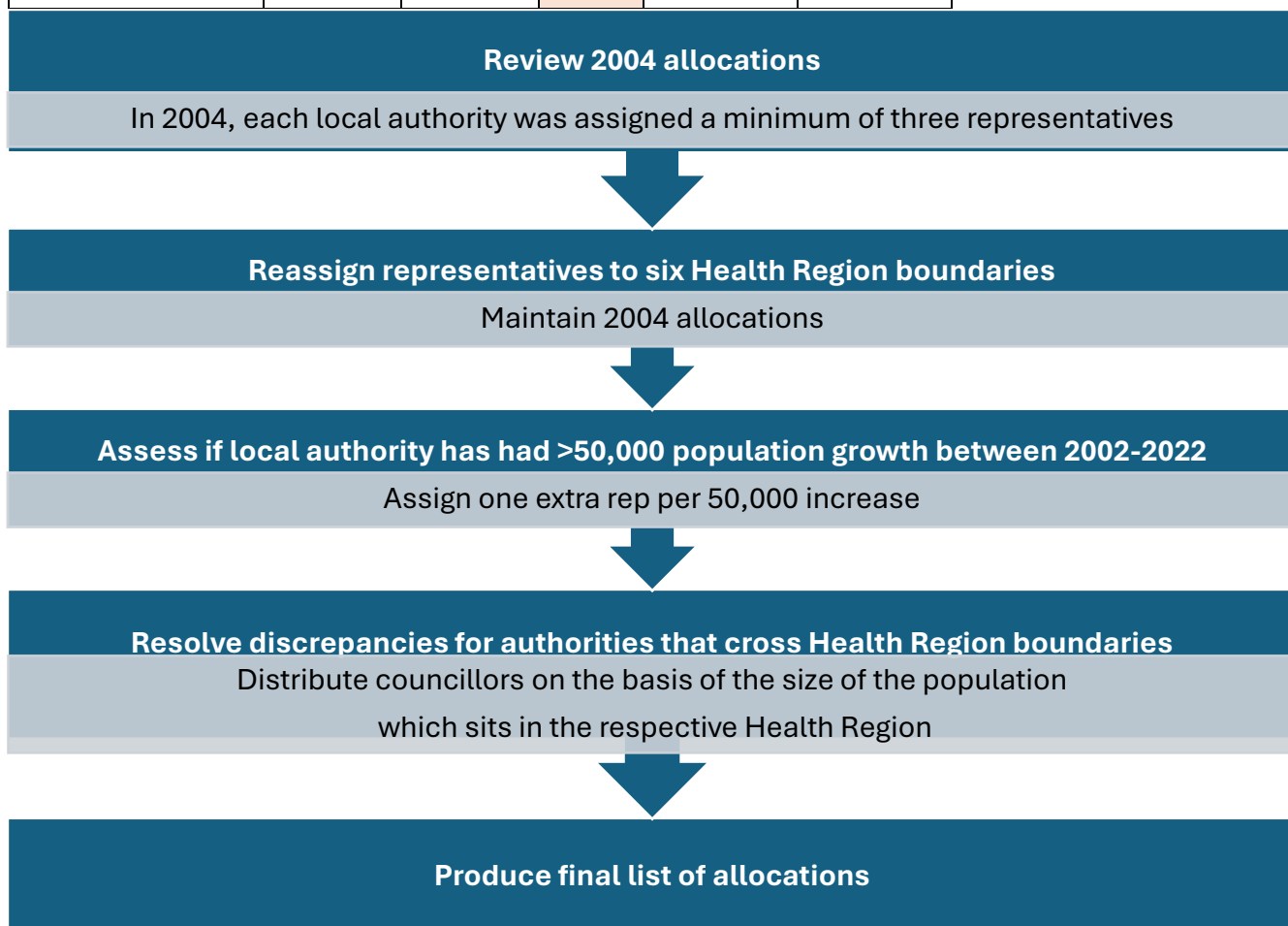
Table 2: Allocation of representatives to old Regional Health Forums for comparison

Four Existing Health Forums	Existing Reps	Extra Rep. for 50k Increase in Local Authority population	Total New Reps	2002 Population	2022 Population
Dublin and Northeast	29	4	33	830,944	1,188,287
Dublin Mid Leinster	40	2	42	1,140,825	1,499,012

¹ 2002 Census data was only available at Local Authority Level. Where Local Authorities are now split between Health Regions, the share of the 2002 population that falls either side of these splits could not be calculated as the data was not available at small area level. Instead, the analysis used the 2022 population splits (percent residing in each Health Region) and applied them to the 2002 population.



South	39	3	42	1,003,972	1,290,334
West	40	1	41	941,462	1,171,506
Grand Total	148	10	158	3,917,203	5,149,139



Allocations for noting

As there have been some changes to the Local Authorities since S.I. No. 797/2005, and four counties (Wicklow, Cavan, Tipperary, and Dublin) span multiple Health Regions, the allocation must account for these discrepancies. Where these splits occur, the decision around which forum to allocate councillors to was made on the basis of the size of the population which sits in the respective Health Region. These are described below and shown in Figures 1-4.

1. Limerick City Council and Limerick County Council have merged. No change is required as all representatives sit in HSE Mid West.
2. Waterford City Council and Waterford County Council have merged. No change is required as all representatives sit in the HSE Dublin and South East.



3. North Tipperary County Council and South Tipperary County Council have merged. Tipperary is split between HSE Dublin and South East (55% of 2022 population) and HSE Midwest (45%). HSE Dublin and South East contains the Local Electoral Areas (LEAs) of Clonmel, Cahir, Cashel-Tipperary, Carrick-on-Suir, and some parts of Thurles (13%). HSE Midwest contains the LEAs of Nenagh, Newport, Roscrea-Templemore, and the majority of Thurles (87%). Four councillors are allocated to HSE Dublin and South East, three councillors are allocated to HSE Midwest.
4. Wicklow is split between HSE Dublin and Midlands (13% of 2022 population) and HSE Dublin and South East (87%). Baltinglass LEA is split between HSE Dublin and Midlands (73%) and HSE Dublin and South East (27%), while the other LEAs in Wicklow lie in Dublin and South East. One representative is assigned to HSE Dublin and Midlands and three are assigned to HSE Dublin and South East.
5. Cavan is split between HSE Dublin and North East (99%) and HSE North and North West (1%). All three councillors are allocated to HSE Dublin and North East.
6. Dublin City Council was previously split across two Health Forums – Dublin City North was in the Dublin and Northeast forum while Dublin City South was in the Dublin Mid Leinster forum. To align with HSE Health Regions it needs to be split across three regions:
 - The area previously referred to as Dublin City North lies in HSE Dublin and North East. This is the area of Dublin City Council which contains the LEAs of Artane-Whitehall, Ballymun-Finglas, Cabra-Glasnevin, Clontarf, Donaghmede, and North Inner City. All eight councillors previously assigned to the Health Forum of Dublin and Northeast are assigned to HSE Dublin and North East, and there is an extra representative added to account for the population increase.
 - a. The area previously referred to as Dublin City South is now split between HSE Dublin and Midlands (79% of 2022 population) and HSE Dublin and South East (21%). HSE Dublin and Midlands contains the LEAs of Ballyfermot-Drimnagh, South West Inner City, Kimmage-Rathmines, a portion of South East Inner City (77%) and a small part of Pembroke (8%). HSE Dublin and South East contains a portion South East Inner City LEA (23%) and the majority of Pembroke LEA (92%). Previously there were six representatives, and they were on the Dublin Mid Leinster Health Forum. Now five representatives are assigned to HSE Dublin and Midlands, while one is assigned to HSE Dublin and South East.

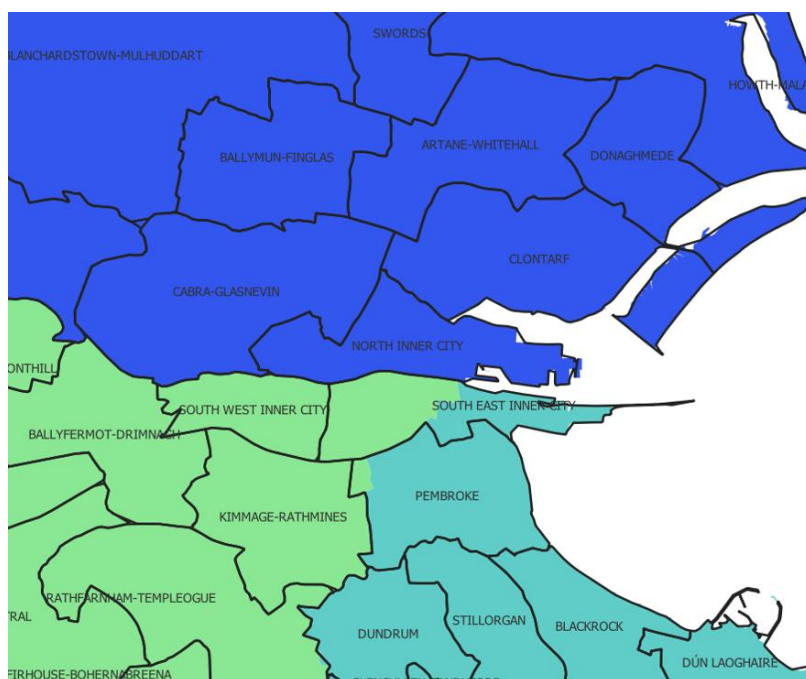


Figure 1: Overlay of Dublin City Council LEAs across HSE Health Regions

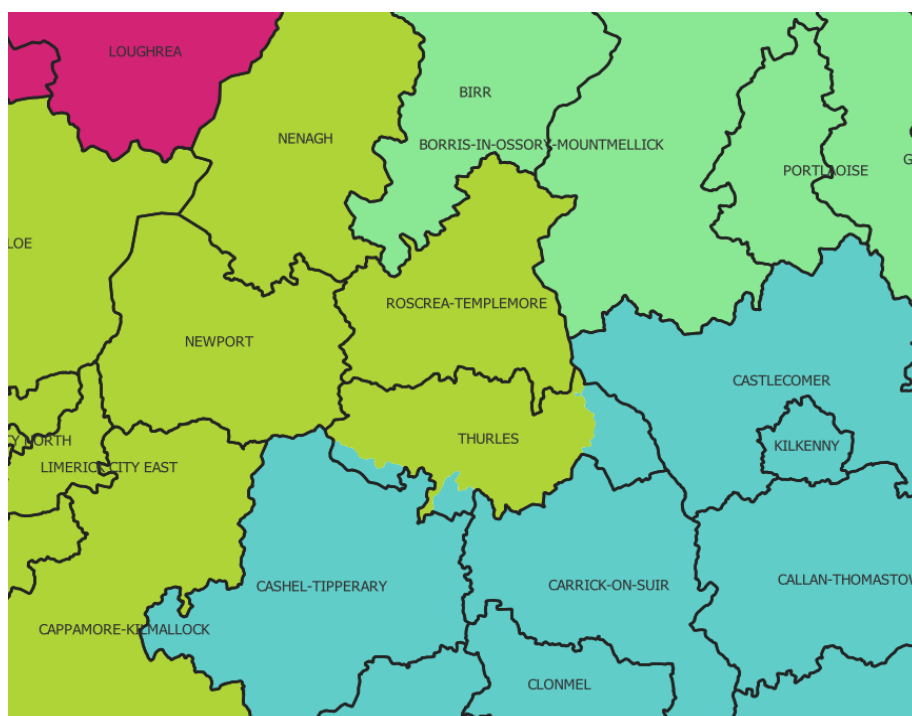


Figure 2: Overlay of Tipperary LEAs across HSE Health Regions

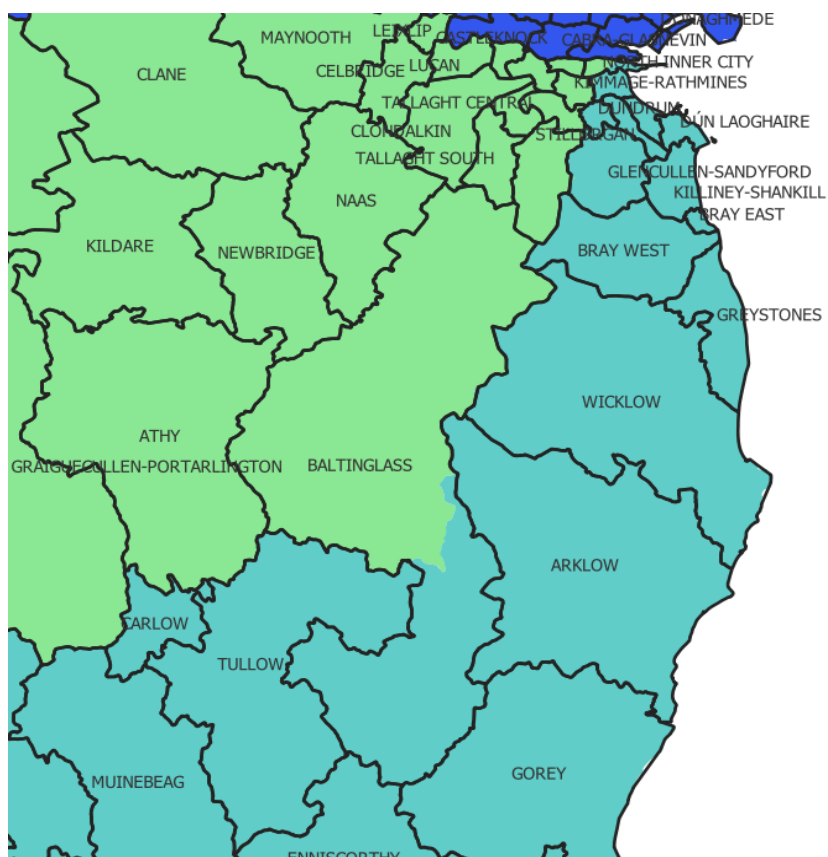


Figure 3: Overlay of Wicklow LEAs across HSE Health Regions

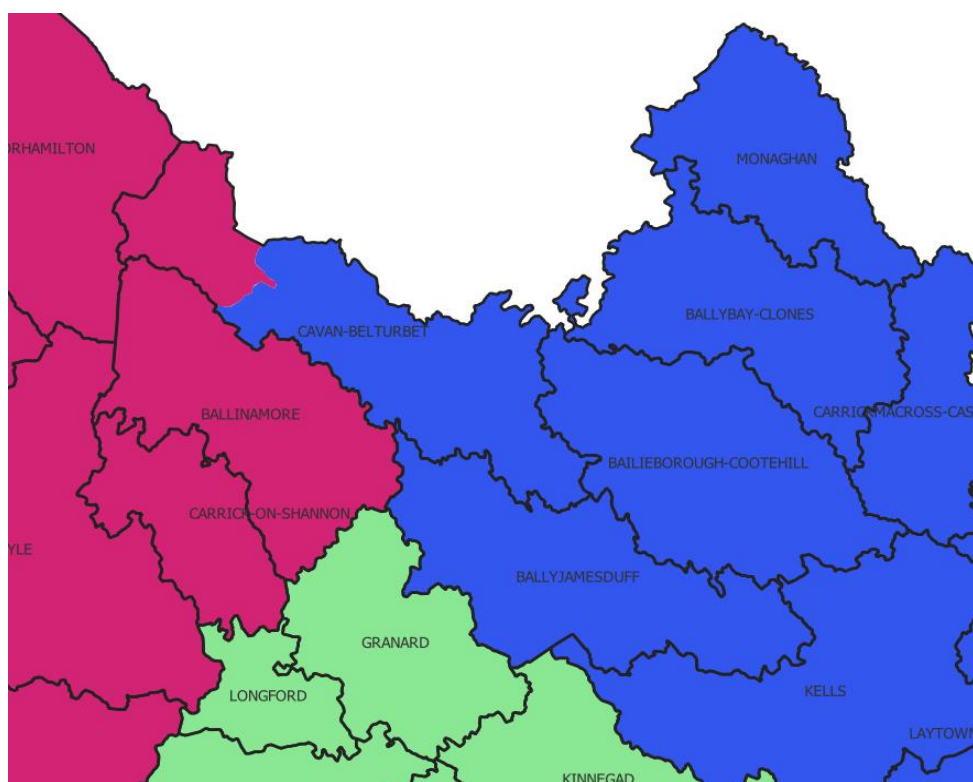
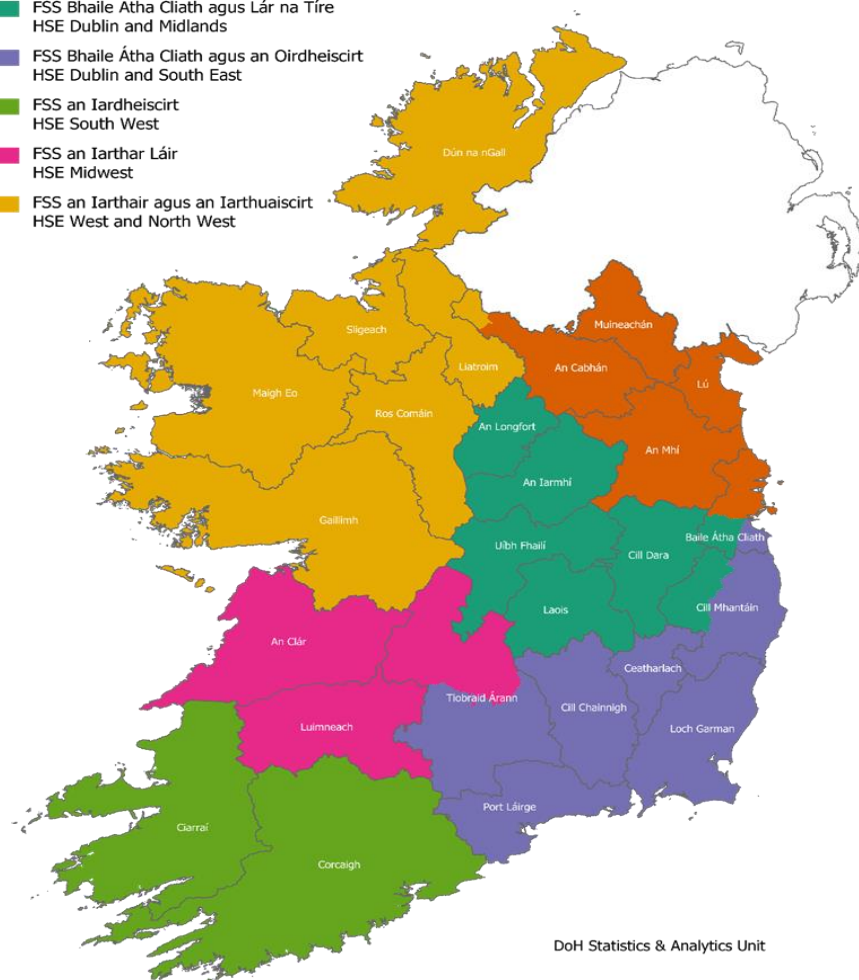


Figure 4: Overlay of Cavan LEAs across HSE Health Regions



HSE Health Regions

- FSS Bhaile Átha Cliath agus an Oirthuaiscirt
HSE Dublin and North East
- FSS Bhaile Átha Cliath agus Lár na Tíre
HSE Dublin and Midlands
- FSS Bhaile Átha Cliath agus an Oirdheiscirt
HSE Dublin and South East
- FSS an Iardheiscirt
HSE South West
- FSS an Iarthar Láir
HSE Midwest
- FSS an Iarthair agus an Iarthuaiscirt
HSE West and North West



DoH Statistics & Analytics Unit

Figure 5: Map of six HSE Health Regions