



11 February 2019

Via e-mail: Valerie.watts@hscni.net

Ms Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive
Public Health Agency
4th Floor South
12-22 Linenhall Street
BELFAST BT2 8BS

Dear Valerie

Re: RRCANI and BHSCT: PHA Contract

Thank you for your letter of 14 December 2018. The Trust, as you may be aware, has been dealing with a number of issues in relation to services delivered to the Roma community. A number of these issues have been of concern as they directly impacted on our staff. I have outlined some further details below.

The Trust has a long history of working with the Roma community in Belfast and began working with RRCANI in 2011. We have also worked closely with the PHA to develop a Roma focused early years' service over the past years.

The Trust has [REDACTED] who until May 2018 were working in the office of RRCANI on University Street. As a result of the issues of concern, including allegations of charging for advice services, the Trust along with its partner organisation, Surestart, were left with no option but to arrange a temporary relocation of the Early Years' service from the RRCANI building. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Trust, as a public sector organisation with a commitment to reducing inequality and protecting vulnerable people, has a duty to take seriously any allegations made to us. The services continued to be delivered at a new location, as we liaised with RRCANI to address the issues raised.

Senior members of Trust staff subsequently met with RRCANI on a number of occasions to attempt to seek a way forward. However, in late September we were disappointed to learn that RRCANI no longer wished to engage with the Trust.

In relation to the points raised in your letter, we are aware of the unsubstantiated allegations being made by RRCANI against the Trust and [REDACTED] and over the last 8 months have dealt with a range of media, FOI and other queries in relation to this. The Trust position is that these allegations by RRCANI are completely unfounded. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In relation to complaints, the Trust have previously forwarded RRCANI the Trust complaints policy and leaflet on 28 June 2018, but to date, no formal complaint has been received.

Currently an early years' service, which is accessible to the Roma community continues to be delivered from Mornington Community Centre and the Trust is currently working with a range of statutory partners including The Executive Office, Belfast City Council, Department for Communities and PSNI, to develop an interagency advice clinic for the Roma community. The first two clinics were delivered on the 18 and 22 January and were well attended. This will allow us the opportunity to continue to engage with the Roma community.

Throughout this process, Trust staff have been regularly liaising with Senior PHA staff to keep them updated and to discuss services models moving forward.

This has been a difficult time for all concerned, and the Trust's main aim has been, and will continue to be, to support the staff affected by this situation and to continue to deliver services to the Roma community.

If you or your staff wish to discuss this, further please do not hesitate to contact me or Jennifer Thompson, Interim Director of Performance Planning and Informatics.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Martin Dillon
Chief Executive