Nursing Home Expert Panel Report

Implementation Oversight Team (IOT)

Meeting: 2nd December 2020, 10.30 am

Meeting note

Attendees:

Kathleen Mac Lellan	Chair, Assistant Secretary, Social Care Division, DOH

Niall Redmond	Principal Officer, Older Persons Policy Development Unit, DOH
Karen Greene	Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health, DOH
Rosarie Lynch	Head of Patient Safety Surveillance, NPSO, DOH
David Noonan	Principal Officer, GP Services and GMS Contract, DOH
Georgina Bassett	Nursing Project Manager, Older Persons Policy Development, DOH
Malachy Corcoran	Principal Officer, Unscheduled Care, Department of Health, DOH
Clodagh Murphy	Assistant Principal, Acute Hospitals, DOH
Nuala O'Reilly	Assistant Principal, Older Persons Policy Development Unit, DOH
Helena Keleher	Principal Officer, Older Persons Policy Development Unit, DOH
Neil Kavanagh	HEO, Older Persons Policy Development Unit, DOH
Malachy Corcoran	Principal Officer, Unscheduled Care, Department of Health, DOH
David Walsh	Implementation Lead, HSE
Pat Healy	National Director Community Strategy, HSE
Deirdre Lang	Director of Nursing, HSE
Dr. John Cuddihy	National Director, Public Health, HSE
Dr Siobhán Kennelly	National Clinical Advisor and Group Lead, Older Persons, HSE
Gerry Clerkin	General Manager, Community Operations, HSE
Susan Cliffe	Deputy Chief Inspector, HIQA
Kelly Jones	Project Manager, HIQA
Fiona Walsh	Fair Deal Specialist, NTPF
Ms. Brigid Doherty	Public Interest Representative

Apologies:

Dr Kevin Kelleher	Assistant National Director, Public Health, HSE
Prof. Cecily Kelleher	Chair of Reference Group
Mary Dunnion	Chief Inspector of Social Services, HIQA
Fiona Larthwell	Principal Officer, Older Persons Services Oversight & Planning, DOH

Secretariat:

Deirdre O'Riordan	Executive Officer, Older Persons Policy Development Unit, DOH
Stephen Dunk	Executive Officer, Older Persons Policy Development Unit, DOH

DISCUSSION and ACTION POINTS

	Agenda item	Discussion and Actions Agreed
1.	**Adoption of minutes of previous meeting**	The minutes of the previous meeting were adopted without amendment. The Chair reported that an Interagency meeting will take place after today's IOT to discuss the recent HIQA Risk Assessment Report provided to the Minister. Action 1.1 An update from the interagency meeting on the HIQA Risk Assessment Report will be provided at the next meeting.
2.	**Conflict of Interest**	There were no issues raised in this regard at this meeting.
3.	**Update on Epidemiological Data**	The latest epidemiological data was discussed including the trends of national cases. The decrease in the number of Nursing Home outbreaks was welcomed by the group but it was noted that the high incidence rate in older people is still concerning. Action 3.1 Secretariat to circulate epidemiological data presentation to IOT and Reference Group.
4.	**ECDC Risk Assessment - long-term care facility**	The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) recently published its latest risk assessment. This Assessment was discussed in detail. It was noted that the ECDC concluded that the risk related to COVID-19 infection in EU/EEA and UK is currently considered very high for residents of these services. The importance of aligning the work of the Implementation Oversight Team to international research was recognised. DOH is drafting a comparison table setting out the actions taken by the State against the ECDC options. Action 4.1 Secretariat will circulate the table of options from the ECDC Risk Assessment compared with the actions/measures adopted in Ireland related to each option. Action 4.2 Agency Leads to examine the draft and add any further relevant material. This will be tabled as an agenda item for the next meeting.

5.	Matters for Referral to Reference Group	A paper on the HIQA Staffing Survey was circulated to and endorsed by the Reference Group.
		The Chair encouraged IOT members to consider matters for referral to the reference group.
		The HSE confirmed that they are scheduling an internal meeting for discussions on Recommendation 6.1 & 6.6
		Action 5.1 HSE is to have an internal meeting to discuss recommendations 6.1 and 6.6 and assess what actions are required to progress their implementation.
6.	Updates/Matters Arising	(a)General
		It was confirmed that that agency staff are included in serial testing programmes in nursing homes. HSE identified some gaps in implementation but the HSE is committed to following up to get a full register of agencies in place to allow for direct follow up to ensure processes are in place to capture the agency staff in the serial testing programme.
		The Chair conveyed NHI's and HSE's assurance that nursing homes are providing for the inclusion of agency staff within serial testing onsite at nursing homes. The Chair also confirmed that the Department has requested the HPSC to consider, in the context of referrals for testing, whether the Person in Charge could refer residents for testing directly (rather than requiring a referral from a GP).
		A query was raised in relation to student nurses working in nursing homes as care assistants.
		It was noted that there would be no reason to assume that they would not be picked up in the serial testing programmes and there is no suggestion that this is not the case. The Office of the CNO confirmed that as part of their training, student nurses would receive mandatory infection prevention & control training prior to commencing clinical placements and work under clinical supervision during placements. It was also noted that the placements and employment of student nurses in settings such as nursing homes were important for education and development and can also be helpful in attracting nurses into care of older persons services in the future. Where students are employed as HCAs and working in nursing homes part time or through an agency, there must be local risk assessment undertaken to ensure appropriate protective measures are in place for residents.
		Action 6.1 DOH to examine the issue raised by HIQA where student nurses may be working in nursing homes in the context of potential

cross infection and revert to the IOT on the matter

The new COVID-19 guidance on visits to long-term care facilities published by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) on 30 November was discussed. In order to allow time for nursing homes to make the appropriate arrangements and plan for the implementation, the guidance comes into effect on 7 December. It was noted that the HSE will include a segment regarding the guidance in this week's webinar. It was also noted that AMRIC is holding a focused webinar on 4 December for stakeholders to provide an overview of the guidance.

The Implementation Oversight team acknowledged the need for strong communications with residents and their families in order to manage expectations. Planning will be key for nursing home providers.

Action 6.2 Secretariat to circulate the HPSC updated Visiting Guidelines to the IOT Group.

(b) Safe Staffing

The Office of the CNO confirmed that the international evidence review on safe staffing has been received by the Department. The CNO's Office also confirmed that the unit will continue to engage with the HSE and other stakeholders and that a task force will be established in January 2021.

(c) Update on HIQA staffing (survey audit)

The chair acknowledged the work of HIQA and CNO's office in relation to the survey.

There was a suggestion that the survey be conducted by way of interview. However HIQA confirmed that it would not be practical to do so, and would create additional burden for nursing home staff.

(d) Update on communications campaign

The information campaign targeting persons-in-charge of nursing homes was discussed. A series of webinars commenced on 19th November for 4 weeks. It was confirmed that over 600 people have attended the webinars so far.

Action 6.3 HSE to provide an update on the communication campaign to include data on attendance numbers at next meeting.

(e) Update from Reference Group

It was confirmed that the Reference Group subgroups met in advance of Reference Group's most recent meeting on 23 November. An additional meeting of the Reference Group will take place next week to discuss the outputs from the subgroups. The Chair of the Reference Group will provide an update at the IOT meeting. The important work

		of the Reference Group and the subgroups was acknowledged by the Chair.

There was discussion in relation to the work of the subgroup regarding Recommendation 7 (Community Support Teams) and Recommendation 8 (GP Lead Roles). The HSE indicated that it has developed workstreams to progress the implementation of the GP related recommendations. In order to avoid the duplication of work and to provide clarity on the processes currently in place, HSE and DoH agreed that an engagement with the Reference Group subgroup should take place to provide further clarity on the processes.

Action 6.4 HSE and DOH to consider engagement with a subgroup of the reference group on with regard to recommendations 7 and 8. |
| 7. | Second Progress Report | The Chair indicated that the focus of the report will be the implementation of the recommendations for which nursing home providers have been identified as lead. The outcomes from the 1st phase of HIQA survey of providers' implementation progress, the NHI survey and the HSE survey will be included in the progress report. The report will also highlight further progress in relation to the recommendations reported in the first progress report.

It was noted that the first progress report is about to be published. IOT members requested that reports be published as early as possible as they demonstrate the considerable work of the agencies and other stakeholders.

Action 7.1 Agency leads to provide updates for the second progress report by cob Friday 4 December.

(i) Update on HIQA survey of providers' implementation progress (1st Phase)
The closing date for returns on the survey was 1 December. HIQA confirmed that it had a 56% response rate to the survey. It is expected that HIQA will submit a report on the outcomes of the survey to the Department shortly. A further update will be provided to the group at the next meeting.

Action 7.2 HIQA to provide update on the survey of providers at the next IOT meeting, noting that the output of this survey will form a significant input to the second IOT progress report. |
| 8. | HSE & HIQA Communication Protocol in relation to recommendation 14.1 | HIQA and the HSE are to establish a communication protocol as the next step in relation to recommendation 14.1 (roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders). The HSE and HIQA will meet to discuss this matter on the 8th December.

Action 8.1 HSE /HIQA to provide an update on the Communications |

		Protocol under recommendation 14.1 at the next IOT meeting.
9.	**NTPF Costings Overview**	The NTPF presented an analysis of the Temporary Assistance Payment Scheme (TAPS) so far, noting that some 70% of the funding claimed to date related to payroll/staffing costs. The presentation provided an overview of the costs analysis regarding COVID-19 and nursing homes in the context of TAPS, highlighting the extensive supports provided to Nursing Homes via the TAPS and also identifying the various cost drivers under the Scheme. The issue of access to funding for staffing costs through TAPS was discussed. HIQA and the NTPF will have further engagements on this matter. Action 9.1 NTPF to provide DOH with a further breakdown on staffing costs.
10.	**A.O.B.**	The next meeting of the IOT will take place on the 16th December. Action 10.1 HSE to provide update on temporary staff accommodation at the next IOT meeting. Action 10.2 HSE to provide update on influenza vaccination uptake at the next meeting.