



Mr. Paul Reid,
Chief Executive Officer & Chair HSE National Crisis Management Team (NCMT),
Health Services Executive,
Dr Steevens' Hospital,
Dublin 8,
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3rd December 2020

Via email to: ceo.office@hse.ie

Dear Paul,

Arising from today's meeting of the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET), I wish to bring to your attention, as Chair of the HSE NCMT, the following decisions of the NPHET which are now required to be actioned by the HSE and Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC):

- The NPHET endorses the updated *"National Guidelines for the Public Health Management of Close Contacts of Cases of COVID-19"*, notwithstanding additional considerations that are required for the testing and recommended isolation periods for close contacts in light of recently published ECDC guidance.
- The NPHET endorses the HSE papers *"Enhanced measures for the control of spread of COVID-19 in Acute Hospitals"* and *"Serial Testing of Health Care Workers in Acute Facilities"* and recommends that mass testing continue for all hospital outbreaks. The NPHET also notes and welcomes the planned implementation of a serial testing programme for healthcare workers commencing 4th January 2021.
- The NPHET endorses the HPSC's *"COVID-19 Guidance for Religious Services"* and recommends their dissemination.

For your information, you may also wish to note that the NPHET endorsed a joint Department of Health and National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) paper which set out a provisional prioritisation list of groups for vaccination; this was considered appropriate on the basis of currently available data but will be subject to ongoing review as the situation evolves and new information becomes available.

Additionally, the resource constraints to operationalising the appropriate public health management of cases, clusters, and outbreaks were highlighted to the NPHET today. It is clear that any significant increase in incidence over the coming weeks has the potential to once again challenge the timely investigation and management of cases, clusters, and outbreaks by Departments of Public Health.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the wider team across the HSE for your ongoing support and work across the health and social care services as we move through the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency. Officials from this Department have been, and continue to be, available to work with relevant HSE staff.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Holohan', written over a horizontal line.

Dr Tony Holohan
Chief Medical Officer

cc. Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer, HSE
Mr Liam Woods, National Director, Acute Hospital Operations, HSE