

# Expert Group on the Role of Ventilation in Reducing Transmission of COVID-19

## Meeting 5

2pm Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021

(By Videoconference)

### Present

Prof John Wenger (Chair)	UCC
Dr Marie Coggins	NUIG
Dr Laura Heavey	HSE
Asst Prof Orla Hegarty	UCD
Mr Simon Jones	IEA and Aereco Ltd.
Ms Edel Murray	DHLGH
Prof Mike Prentice	UCC
Mr Brendan Redington	HSE Estates
Dr Kim Roberts	TCD
Dr Thomas Roux	HPSC

### Apologies

Dr Ina Kelly	HSE
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### MINUTES

#### 1. Minutes from last meeting, matters arising and conflicts of interest

Minutes from Meeting 4 were edited during the meeting and approved. The “Declaration of Interests” form was discussed. All Group members should send a signed copy of the form to the Chair before the next meeting.

#### 2. Communications and correspondence

The following documents for submission to the NPHET Secretariat were discussed and approved in principle: Agendas and Minutes for meetings 1-3; Terms of Reference and Membership; First Report. Any suggestions for final edits should be sent to the Chair as soon as possible. The Chair outlined some recent correspondence with the HSA in relation to their involvement with the Group.

#### 3. Updates from sub-groups

##### Schools

The discussions that took place in the recent sub-group meeting attended by a Department of Education (DoE) representative were outlined. Topics discussed included:

- awareness of the importance of ventilation in schools
- the document issued by DoE on practical steps to ensure good ventilation in schools (released 30/11/2020)
- CO2 monitors for assessing ventilation and helping to achieve a balance between ventilation and thermal comfort in the classroom

- the potential use of HEPA filter devices in classrooms
- natural ventilation and extraction fans in toilets, especially in relation to the possibility of faecal-oral transmission in primary schools which have ensuite toilets.

#### Healthcare settings

The discussions that took place in the recent sub-group meeting attended by representatives from HIQA were outlined. The focus was on long-term residential care facilities (LTRCF). Topics discussed included:

- awareness of the importance of ventilation in these facilities
- current guidance for LTRCF
- scope of HIQA's regulatory role in relation to LTRCF
- issues around non-uniformity of LTRCF buildings
- role of national guidance in informing regulation of LTRCF

#### **4. Discussion on terminology and language used in documents and guidance**

The Group held a brief discussion on the use of terminology related to modes of transmission. In accordance with previous discussions, it was agreed that plain language should be used and while terms such as aerosols and droplets may be required, unnecessary technical aspects should be avoided. Good examples of this approach can be seen in guidance issued by the Canadian government and documents published by EMG SAGE (UK).

#### **5. Discussion on HPSC document: Guidance on non-healthcare building ventilation during COVID-19**

The feedback received to date was discussed along with the previous comments in relation to CO<sub>2</sub> and air filtration/cleaning. A draft response prepared by one of the Group was also presented. It was decided that rather than addressing the HPSC guidance directly, a better approach would be to prepare our own report on ventilation and other control measures to reduce the risk of airborne transmission. Specific recommendations for schools and other priority areas could follow on from this. The plan is to prepare a draft, discuss at subsequent meetings, finalise and submit by 2 March 2021.

#### **6. Any Other Business**

The next meetings were provisionally scheduled for 10-12 on Thursday 25 February and 10-11 on Monday 1 March.

25 February 2021