

Research Sub-group to the Expert Advisory Group (REAG)

Update for NPHEG 05/05/2020

1. REAG has collated suggested research areas from NPHEG subgroups and also from other Government Departments to add to issues that came up in our own deliberations- and have developed a short paper highlighting the nature and breadth of the research agenda which is required to support policy responses across sectors in the short-medium term, and making the case for the need for significant additional investment to be provided for same. The paper will be circulated to Government Departments this week and will then be submitted to EAG.
2. COVID-19 research awards funded by Science Foundation Ireland-IDA- Enterprise Ireland (5 awards) and by the Health Research Board-Irish Research Council (21 awards) were announced on Wednesday 29th April.
3. The dedicated National Research Ethics Committee (NREC) for Covid-19 is fully operational and reviewing applications. The Minister formally approved additional members to serve on the committee, including public and patient representatives. The NREC Office is liaising closely with the Local Research Ethics Committees (RECs) and will collate high level information on Covid-19 research projects which have secured REC approval across the country. This insight will be important for the REAG and all those examining research priorities and coordination in the months ahead.
4. Planning is at an advanced stage for Ireland's participation in the WHO Solidarity Trial for Covid-19 patients in hospitals. The Department of Health will act as the co-sponsor for this trial with WHO, and will work closely with the HRB, University College Cork (delegated sponsor responsibilities) and HRB-funded Clinical Research Coordination Ireland (HRB-CRCI) to ensure coordination with hospitals and clinicians across the country. Work is underway to secure state indemnity for product and professional liability for the trial, to finalise provision and distribution of remdesivir and to secure additional funding to progress the trial. The Department (in conjunction with the HRB) is also currently exploring opportunities for Ireland to collaborate in an international trial for Covid-19 patients in community healthcare settings.
5. The group is planning to conduct a self-assessment this week.