



**National Public Health Emergency Team – Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)  
Meeting Note**

<b>Date and Time</b>	30 January 2020 (Meeting 2)
<b>Location</b>	Department of Health, Miesian Plaza, Dublin 2
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Tony Holohan, CMO
<b>Members in Attendance</b>	Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer (CCO), HSE Dr Kevin Kelleher, Asst. National Director, Public Health, HSE Dr Cillian de Gascun, Laboratory Director, NVRL Dr John Cuddihy, Acting Director, HSE HPSC Ms Denise Long, General Manager, Office of Emergency Planning, HSE Mr David Leach, Communications, HSE Dr Jeanette McCallion, Medical Assessor, HPRA Mr Sean Egan, Head of Healthcare Regulation, HIQA (via teleconference) Dr Ronan Glynn, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, DOH Dr Colette Bonner, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, DOH Mr Eddie O'Reilly, Communicable Diseases Policy Unit, DOH Mr Liam Morris, Acute Hospitals Policy Division, DOH Ms Celeste O'Callaghan, Acute Hospitals Policy Division, DOH Mr David Noonan, GP Services and GMS Contract Unit, DOH Ms Deirdre Watters, Communications Unit, DOH
<b>Apologies</b>	N/A
<b>In Attendance</b>	Ms Aoife Gillivan and Ms Mary Jane Trimble, Communications Unit, DOH
<b>Secretariat</b>	Ms Rosarie Lynch and Ms Sarah Treleaven, Patient Safety Surveillance Unit, NPSO, DOH

**1. Welcome and Matters Arising**

The Chair welcomed the group and introductions were made.

DOH advised that the issue of coronavirus (2019-nCoV) had been discussed at a Department of Health (DOH)/HSE meeting on January 30<sup>th</sup>. It was noted that the HSE Crisis Management Team has been established and is meeting regularly.

The importance of a unified national approach to the management and containment of 2019-nCoV was noted.

**2. Current Assessment/Epidemiology**

HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) updated the group on the latest known epidemiological figures. It was noted that HPSC's website is updated at the same time each day with the most up to date figures. This should be regarded as the most accurate and current source of information.

HPSC advised that they produce a daily situational analysis. This may prove helpful in informing NPHET discussions.

**Action: HPSC to share their situational report with DOH.**

HPSC advised that the European Centre for Disease Control's (ECDC) risk assessment from 27<sup>th</sup> January states there is a moderate risk of an infection in the EU region and a moderate risk of transmission in the affected zone in China.



It was noted that HSE algorithms for health settings include geographic criteria based upon World Health Organisation (WHO) and ECDC recommendations and information. HSE stated that these algorithms were structured to accommodate changing geographic criteria.

At this point in time, WHO recommends countries follow a strategy of containment.

The National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) updated the group. They advise that there is little evidence of mutation of the virus at present, though this is based on analysis of a small number of sequences to date.

### **3. Preparedness**

HSE provided an update on the preparedness preparations that have taken place. This included considerations regarding general practice, HSE Community Operations, Pre-hospital Services, Acute Hospitals, Occupational Health, Airports and Ports, Procurement, Waste Management and Private Facilities.

**Action: DOH to raise the issue of PPE procurement at the EU Health Security Committee meeting tomorrow (31st January 2020).**

NVRL updated the group on their preparedness. Testing for 2019-nCoV will be fully functional in the coming days, providing the capacity to test specimens with short turnaround times.

HPRA updated the group on product regulatory matters.

### **4. Communications**

HSE advised that their communications unit has established a multi-disciplinary team to support their communications response. They also advised that FAQs are in place for HSE Live calls received. They noted that they are monitoring the volume of web/social media activity related to 2019-nCoV. A broadcast email was sent to HSE healthcare workers today to ensure they have latest information.

**Action: HSE and DOH Communications to agree an approach to FAQs/public communications documents, which will be shared on their respective websites.**

**Action: Create a link from the Department of Health webpage to the HPSC webpage regarding 2019-nCoV information and figures and vice versa.**

Communications with the Chinese community in Ireland was discussed. DOH have offered a meeting to the Chinese Embassy in Ireland.

**Action: Should future meetings with institutions that have interactions with high numbers of Chinese nationals occur, representatives from DOH and HSE will be made available.**

Communications practices developed during previous outbreaks (H1N1/SARS) may be informative.

**Action: HSE and DOH Communications teams to discuss preparatory communications plans in the event of confirmed case(s) in Ireland.**

### **5. Engagement with Other Government Departments/Agencies**

The DOH updated the group on engagement with other government departments/agencies. It was noted that repatriation of Irish nationals is under the remit of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). DFAT currently recommend only essential travel to China.



**Action: At the EU Health Security Committee meeting tomorrow, DOH will ask for consideration to be given to adopting a common EU approach to quarantine of repatriated nationals.**

The Health Threats Coordination Group (HTCG) will meet Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February. This provides a mechanism through which other Government departments and agencies can be briefed on the current situation.

In addition, the Chief Medical Officer remains in close contact with colleagues in Northern Ireland, as does the HSE with HPA, NI.

#### **6. Draft Document on Expert Advisory Group**

A proposal for membership and Terms of Reference for an Expert Advisory Group (EAG) on 2019-nCoV to support the work of the NPHET was circulated prior to the meeting. An EAG is an important source of independent, ongoing expert advice and support in public health emergencies. Dr de Gascun has agreed to serve as Chair and HPSC will provide secretariat support. EAG will convene on Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> February.

**Action: Convene the EAG with Terms of Reference and membership as discussed.**

#### **7. HPSC Proposal to Designate 2019-nCoV as a Notifiable Disease**

Prior to the meeting, HPSC circulated a document for consideration regarding the addition of 2019-nCoV to the list of notifiable diseases under the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 and subsequent amendments. The DOH agreed to progress amending the legislation as proposed. This amendment is subject to the usual legislative processes.

It was noted that the current legislation already has the provision for the novel agents to be managed as notifiable diseases and that this would work until the amendment was in place.

**Action: Progress amendment of the Statutory Instrument of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 and subsequent amendments to include 2019-nCoV.**

#### **8. AOB**

The potential implications of measures such as self-isolation will have on individuals in terms of work was discussed.

**Action: DOH to raise with the Department of Social Protection the issue of the potential implications of measures, such as self-isolation, will have on individuals in terms of work.**

NPHET Secretariat advised that a DOH email address for the NPHET-Coronavirus meetings has been created. This will be circulated for the use of members. NPHET members were advised that all items related to the NPHET-Coronavirus meetings should be directed to this email.

NPHET meetings will be scheduled weekly on a Tuesday afternoon. This frequency will be reviewed as needed.

**Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February at 3pm