



**National Public Health Emergency Team – COVID-19
Meeting Note**

Date and Time	11 th February 2020 (Meeting 4)
Location	Department of Health, Miesian Plaza, Dublin 2
Chair	Dr Tony Holohan, CMO
Members in Attendance	Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer (CCO), HSE Dr Kevin Kelleher, Asst. National Director, Public Health, HSE Dr Cillian de Gascun, Laboratory Director, NVRL and Expert Advisory Group Chair Dr John Cuddihy, Acting Director, HSE HPSC Ms Tom McGuinness, Asst. National Director, Office of Emergency Planning, HSE Mr David Leach, Communications, HSE Mr Paul Connors, Communications, HSE Mr Ciaran Browne, Acute Operations, HSE (via teleconference) 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 Ms Deirdre Watters, Communications Unit, DOH
Apologies	N/A
In Attendance	Ms Aoife Gillivan, Communications Unit, DOH
Secretariat	Ms Rosarie Lynch and Ms Sarah Treleaven, Patient Safety Surveillance Unit, NPSO, DOH

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed the group. The Terms of Reference were tabled at the meeting and were agreed. These will be uploaded to the Department of Health's website. The requirement of the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 was discussed. It was agreed that the Department would document and note the exemption of this group under the regulations of this act.

Action: DOH to bring the agreed NPHEM Coronavirus Terms of Reference to the Health Threats Coordination Group meeting tomorrow (12th February 2020) for their information.

2. Conflict of Interest Declarations

No members declared any conflicts of interest after a verbal pause.

3. Notes of Previous Meetings

Notes of the previous three meetings were circulated to members via email prior to Meeting 4 (on 7th February 2020). Some small amendments were requested in Meeting 1 Notes and were agreed. Subject to these changes, notes for meetings 1 to 3 were agreed and will be published on the DOH's website.

4. Matters arising

Covered by meeting agenda.

5. Situational Analysis and Governance

The HSE's COVID-19 Report to NPHEM (No. 1) was tabled. The Chair thanked the HSE for providing this document to the NPHEM and noted the comprehensive approach taken. The benefit of this report as a single source of information was acknowledged. This report provides an update on epidemiological and preparedness information. Observations on the report's structure are welcome



DOH noted that they may like to contribute material to this report so that it reflects a more complete picture of the preparedness work.

It is intended to publish this report online each week after the NPHE meeting. The HSE advised that the most up to date figures on tests performed, international information, etc. will be included.

The HSE also tabled Governance and Administrative Instructions for the National Crisis Management Team Management of COVID-19. This was welcomed by the group. The group was requested to revert with any observations to the HSE by Friday 14th February.

Action: All to revert with comments on the format of the situational report and governance papers to HSE / HPSC by COB Friday 14th February.

6. Updates on current situation (for information and discussion)

(a) Current Assessment/Epidemiology

As above, the HSE's COVID-19 Report to NPHE (No. 1) was tabled.

Guidance from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) intended to assist countries in their preparedness planning was discussed. It was acknowledged that much of the preparedness work undertaken by the HSE reflects this. The current ECDC reports currently give information on "EU/EEA +UK". The upcoming meeting of the ECDC Scientific Advisory Group was noted.

Action: Ireland to raise with ECDC at the meeting of the advisory forum to the Scientific Advisory Group to give consideration to the current state of evidence and knowledge and a synthesised overview as a resource.

It was noted that there are ongoing communications between Northern Ireland, England and DOH/HSE counterparts.

A meeting of the Ministerial Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) is scheduled for Thursday, 13th February 2020 and Ireland plans to attend.

(b) Preparedness

Updates were provided by the HSE, with reference to the HSE COVID-19 Report to NPHE (No. 1), in the following areas: Acute Hospitals, Occupational Health, Procurement, Pre-hospital Services, HSE Community Operations, Health Protection Surveillance Centre, Communications and Port Health.

Action: The issue of suitable isolation accommodation for a larger number of suspected cases, should this be required, will be raised at the Health Threats Coordination Group tomorrow (12th February 2020).

The possible impact on donations to the Irish Blood Transfusion Service was discussed. It was noted that ECDC have produced guidance on COVID-19 and blood products.

The HPRA updated the group and noted that work continues at an EMA level in relation to supply of medicines and vaccination development. HPRA continue to liaise with DOH Medicines Unit.

NVRL provided a brief update on testing to date.

(c) Expert Advisory Group (EAG)



First meeting was held last week. It was noted that the EAG considered the question posed to them by NPHE last week and have reverted in writing to the NPHE Chair.

7. Interaction with Government Departments

The DOH updated the group on their interactions with the Department of Social Protection.

Impacts of COVID-19 and related advice for employers/employees was discussed and the need for updated guidance to be available. Also, the role of communications across the spectrum of government departments. Advice for businesses is being prepared by the HSE, as a member of the NPHE, and will be published when ready on the HPSC website.

Action: DOH to bring communications of advice to employers to the Health Threat Coordination Group tomorrow (12th February 2020).

Action: DOH to bring the issue of cross-departmental/governmental communications to the Health Threat Coordination Group (12th February 2020) and propose establishment of a Cross Departmental Comms Group via the HTCG as a subgroup.

A meeting was held with the Chinese Embassy and follow up engagements are being progressed.

A planned meeting of the Government Task Force on Emergency Planning is scheduled for 19th February 2020.

DOH updated the group on possible updates to statutory instruments in the Infectious Diseases Act 1947 and Amendments.

8. Communications Planning

Communications updates were provided by HSE and DOH Communications teams.

Action: The communications teams in the HSE and DOH will share their media books and their media materials produced to date.

9. AOB

The issue of a national translation service was raised by the HSE.

Action: The issue of translation services that may be available in other national agencies to be discussed at the Health Threats Coordination Group (12th February 2020).

It was noted that there have been no changes to Ireland's travel advisory or restriction policies and no public health reason for flight restrictions.

Action: DOH to discuss the travel advisory or restriction policies at the Health Threats Coordination Group (12th February 2020).

The official declaration of the name of the diseases associated with the virus 2019-nCoV was noted. It is now known as COVID-19. Future communications will use both names to ensure that there is no confusion.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 18th February at 3pm