



National Public Health Emergency Team – COVID-19
Meeting Note - *ad hoc* meeting convened via teleconference

Date and Time	Sunday 8 th March 2020 (Meeting 11) at 8pm
Location	Department of Health, Miesian Plaza, Dublin 2 and via teleconference
Chair	Dr Tony Holohan, Chief Medical Officer, DOH
Members in Attendance	Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer, HSE
Members via teleconference	Dr Darina O’Flanagan, Special Advisor to NPHE Dr Cillian de Gascun, Laboratory Director, NVRL and Expert Advisory Group Chair Dr John Cuddihy, Acting Director, HSE HPSC Mr Tom McGuinness, Asst. National Director, Office of Emergency Planning, HSE Mr David Leach, Communications, HSE Dr Jeanette McCallion, Medical Assessor, HPRA Mr Sean Egan, Head of Healthcare Regulation, HIQA Dr Ronan Glynn, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, DOH Dr Colette Bonner, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, DOH Ms Deirdre Watters, Communications Unit, DOH Dr Kevin Kelleher, Asst. National Director, Public Health, HSE Dr Breda Smyth, Public Health, HSE Mr Liam Woods, National Director, Acute Hospitals, HSE Mr Liam Morris, Acute Hospitals, DOH Dr Kathleen Mac Lellan, Social Care Division, DOH Mr Fergal Goodman, Primary Care Division, DOH Ms Tracey Conroy, Acute Hospitals Policy Division, DOH Mr Colm O’Conaill, Policy and Strategy Division, DOH Mr Paul Bolger, Resources Division, DOH Ms Siobhan McArdle, Head of Operations, Primary Care, HSE
Apologies	N/A
‘In attendance’	Ms Aoife Gillivan, Communications Unit, DOH
Secretariat	Ms Rosarie Lynch and Ms Claudine Hughes, NPSO, DOH

1. Welcome and agenda

The Chair welcomed the group and thanked all for joining the teleconference. As this was an *ad hoc* meeting of the NPHE convened via teleconference, the group agreed the following agenda item:

“In light of data unfolding in other European countries, the need to bring forward consideration, on a recommendation on whether the St Patrick’s Day Festival Events should proceed”; noting that this is covered by the agenda for the scheduled meeting on Tuesday, 10th March 2020.

2. St Patrick’s Day Festival Events

Current Situation

In light of the rapidly evolving global situation and that the St Patricks Day is now nine days away, it was considered timely that the NPHE assess the current situation and consider the advice it should give to Government in relation to the Festival.

An update was provided by the DOH on the evolving epidemiological situation in Europe and Ireland.



Consideration was also given to the cases of local transmission that have now arisen in Ireland and the appropriateness of reducing contact between individuals.

It was generally noted that recommendations on mass gatherings are applied as a part of a suite of measures to decrease transmission.

Discussion

A robust discussion took place concerning issues such as the nature of the events that form the St. Patrick's Day celebrations, the duration of the festival events, the large volumes of people travelling from numerous national and international locations, and the location within Ireland of events. It was also noted that such events can be international, national or local in scope.

The group agreed that the NPHEC make the following recommendation:

Given the unique nature and scale of the St Patrick's Day festival events in terms of size, the mass gathering of local and international travellers and the continued progression of community transmission in some European countries along with the emergence of a number of cases (albeit small) of local transmission in Ireland, the NPHEC recommended that the St Patrick's Day festival events do not proceed.

Agreement on this recommendation was informed by considerations on:

- Unique nature and scale of this St. Patrick's Day festival events;
- Transmission seen to date in Ireland; and
- Transmission as seen in other European countries.

This public health recommendation from NPHEC will now be communicated to the Department of the Taoiseach to inform decision-making by Government on the matter. The need for timely and clear communication of this recommendation was acknowledged on by all.

3. AOB

The Chair reminded attendees that all NPHEC discussion and material is deliberative until such time as Government makes a determination in relation to the appropriate course of action, and this is publicly communicated.

4. Date of next meeting

Tuesday, 10th March 2020 at 2:00pm.