



Minister Simon Harris  
Minister for Health  
Department of Health  
Miesian Plaza  
50-58 Lower Baggot Street  
Dublin 2

16<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Via email to Private Secretary to the Minister for Health

Dear Minister Harris

Arising from today's meeting of the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE), I wish to bring to your attention, the following decisions and actions agreed by NPHE:

1. The HSE to expand capacity and processes to deal with increasing numbers of cases to ensure timely contact tracing and surveillance data.
2. The HSE to update and implement guidance in line with Expert Advisory Group (EAG) advice in relation to social distancing, which was accepted by the NPHE.
3. The HSE to update and implement guidance in line with EAG advice in relation to essential healthcare workers return to work in specific scenarios, which was accepted by the NPHE.
4. The HSE (COVID-19 Operations Group) to prepare a paper on matching modelling data with the testing, equipment, and lab capacity data. The first version should be presented at the NPHE meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
5. The NPHE will establish a Guideline Development and Evidence Synthesis Subgroup.
6. The NPHE will further consider the proposal "Provision of Emergency Childcare for Essential Health Care Staff" at the NPHE meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Further work will commence to quantify the impact of this and to identify other measures that may accomplish the stated aims.
7. The NPHE recommends that all Irish residents be advised against all non-essential travel overseas at this time until 29<sup>th</sup> March.
8. The NPHE strongly recommends against leisure cruise ship travel at this time.
9. The NPHE recommends that all persons, including Irish residents, entering the country from overseas should restrict movements for 14 days, if asymptomatic. This does not apply to Northern Ireland at this time. This measure applies prospectively.
10. The NPHE notes that this recommendation on restricted movement does not apply to specified categories of essential supply chain workers (such as pilots, hauliers and maritime staff, either Irish-based or foreign-based). DOH is working with other relevant sectors on protocols for social distancing and other public health measures for these workers. This exemption from the recommendation for restricted movement for all other persons is

contingent on the provision that these protocols are strictly complied with.

Officials from this Department have been and will continue to be available to work with relevant HSE staff and other health agency staff on the implementation of these actions.

I would be happy to discuss further, should you wish.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'pp Holohan', is written above a solid horizontal line.

Dr Tony Holohan  
Chief Medical Officer  
Chair of the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency Team