

Mr. Simon Harris TD
Minister for Health,
Department of Health,
Block 1, Miesian Plaza,
50-58 Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2,
D02 XW14.

Ref: HB00117

Monday 20 April 2020

Dear Minister Harris,

I write to suggest improvements to the nature of the relationship between NPHE and its stakeholders, including the HSE. NPHE has to a very large extent been highly successful as a process. That said all processes can be improved. It has been clear to me and to the Board of the HSE for a while that operational requirements have at times not adequately been considered at the centre of NPHE's decision making.

In this current situation a determination was announced in public which went even further than the letter which the HSE was surprised to receive after the event. Both cut across and pre-empted the process which had been agreed to develop the implementation plan in order to meet and exceed the target of 100,000 tests per week. This paper was to be brought to NPHE, the HSE Board and the Cabinet Committee this coming week. To address this, I have two proposals to make.

The first is that, letters to stakeholders sent after NPHE meetings are checked with the representatives of those stakeholders present at NPHE to ensure they reflect a shared understanding of what was agreed and thus avoid misunderstanding.

The second is that the CMO and Secretary General have a short call with the HSE Chief Executive and me as Chair of the HSE twice a week to ensure alignment and to anticipate issues which may cause problems for all of us down the track. My Board and I feel strongly that this would quickly and helpfully strengthen the NPHE process.

I would be grateful for your consideration of these two proposals.

Finally, may I say that I am hugely admiring of the work of yourself, the Secretary General, the CMO and your Department in the current crisis and I am confident that with some thoughtful improvements to engagement that hard work will only be more impactful.

Yours sincerely,



Ciarán Devane,
Chairperson