



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

22nd May 2020

Via email to Private Secretary to the Minister for Health

Dear Minister,

I write further to today's meeting of the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHEt).

Firstly, on behalf of the NPHEt, I wish to note the huge efforts across society that have enabled the country to rise to the challenge that COVID-19 has presented to Ireland. Through high levels of adherence to the public health social distancing measures and the rapid adjustment to new personal and collective hygiene behaviours, people, including the most vulnerable, have been protected from infection and lives have been saved.

The NPHEt is encouraged that individuals, businesses and organisations across society having been preparing for, and responding effectively, as we commence the process of easing the public health measures. However, the NPHEt continues to emphasise the collective need for good hand and respiratory hygiene, social distancing, limiting close contacts and other public health measures over the coming months.

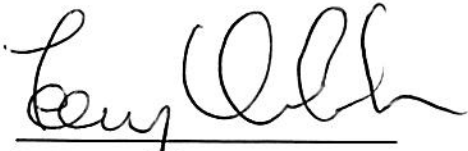
Arising from the discussion at today's meeting, the NPHEt agreed that the document entitled "*Overview of the health system response to date in long-term residential healthcare settings*" is to be submitted to you shortly, following some final editorial amendments, for your consideration and formal approval, with a view to its subsequent publication. The NPHEt considered that it provides a comprehensive overview of the significant range of initiatives that have been taken to respond to COVID-19 in long-term residential healthcare settings.

Furthermore, I also wish to advise you that the NPHEt also gave consideration to the impact of COVID-19 and the pandemic on children, and advice and guidance in relation to the easing of measures relevant to children and families. The NPHEt noted, in particular, the important work being progressed by other Government Departments in relation to children, in particular those with additional needs. The Department of Health will continue to engage across Government to support these initiatives.

I enclose a copy of the letter which has been forwarded to the HSE CEO arising from today's NPHE meeting.

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

Yours sincerely,



Dr Tony Holohan

Chief Medical Officer

Chair of the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency Team

cc. Ms Elizabeth Canavan, Department of the Taoiseach and Chair of the Senior Officials Group for COVID-19