



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

30th July 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 (NPHE), at which the NPHE was apprised of a substantial increase in the number of positive cases notified in the past 24 hours, with outbreaks across a number of settings. The NPHE agreed a number of actions, firstly to contain the increase in cases and outbreaks as swiftly as possible and secondly to put in place structures to allow for a sustainable response to COVID-19.

Having regard to the increasing numbers of positive cases emerging in direct provision centres, the NPHE recommends that the relevant agencies, including the HSE, with cross-Government support, redouble efforts and urgently put in place any additional supports necessary to contain further transmission, including expediting the provision of alternative accommodation options, where required. The NPHE, having equal regard to the needs of other groups in society at potentially increased risk of infection, also recommended that the HSE, with appropriate cross-Government support, ensure the oversight and delivery of the necessary integrated cross-health sector responses to ensure the protection of these groups.

Considering the current epidemiological status of the disease and recognising the need to build upon the HSE's significant work to date the NPHE made a number of recommendations in the enclosed letter to the HSE. These relate to ensuring sufficient resources across Departments of Public Health, and across all aspect of the testing, tracing and reporting pathways to address an emerging weekend effect pattern and in relation to the development of a sustainable plan for the future of public health.

The NPHE also noted the very comprehensive report from the HSE on the programme of serial testing of all staff in nursing homes and recommended this be continued with fortnightly testing for two further testing cycles. This will be kept under review pending the recommendations of the Nursing Homes Expert Panel.

Lastly, the NPHE agreed the enclosed "Framework for Future COVID-19 Pandemic Response: Monitoring Framework" to guide the ongoing response to COVID-19. The Framework sets out a series of key indicators which will support risk assessment at local, regional and national level and will

underpin decision making and responses to the epidemiological situation as it evolves in Ireland. Robust and timely data continues to provide the key foundation to all our decision making and response throughout this pandemic and the formalising of this Monitoring Framework is an important step in ensuring we have an accurate, robust and timely assessment of the extent to which COVID-19 is transmitting in the community and the response to same.

The NPHE of course remains available to provide any further advice and recommendations that may be of assistance to you and Government in relation to ongoing decision-making processes in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Yours sincerely,



Dr Ronan Glynn

A/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