
COVID-19 NPHET Subgroup - Vulnerable People

NPHET Meeting 28/04/2020

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1. NPHEM COVID-19 Subgroup – Vulnerable People

The NPHEM Subgroup on Vulnerable People was established to provide oversight and assurance with regard to the specific preparedness, measures and actions that need to be taken to protect vulnerable groups and individuals in society.

The term vulnerable people is being used to include older people, people with a disability, mental health service users, those with an underlying illness or condition, children in care and those accessing social inclusion services (not an exhaustive list). Services to vulnerable people are provided through a range of settings and are under the remit of a number of Government Departments. These settings include long and short-term care, primary care, respite, day services, prisons and youth detention centres, direct provision and care in individual homes (not an exhaustive list).

The role of the NPHEM Subgroup on Vulnerable People is to ensure that a framework is in place to provide assurance that all relevant Departments and State Agencies have preparedness plans in place to ensure that the people and services they are responsible for, are cared for and protected, as part of the whole of Government response to COVID-19.

2. Meeting 22 April 2020

A meeting of the subgroup was not convened on the week starting Monday 20 April. In the interim, a number of key papers and updates were circulated to the subgroup. The next meeting of the subgroup will take place on 29 April by video conference. To note all subgroup minutes, once agreed by the subgroup, are available on the website at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/301f5e-the-national-public-health-emergency-team-npmet-subgroup-vulnerable/>

3. Updates from Departments/other agencies

As outlined in the last update, as part of the broader assurance framework, a template has been developed and circulated to all relevant government departments and agencies seeking an update on any further actions being progressed for the vulnerable groups under their remit. This template will be circulated fortnightly and a consolidated report circulated to the subgroup and reported back

to NPHEt. The consolidated update as of 28 April is being collated at present and will be submitted to NPHEt when finalised.

4. Update on Long-term Residential Care (LTRC) Mortality Census

A census of mortality in LTRC settings was undertaken by the Department following the action agreed at the NPHEt on Friday 17th April and all facilities were communicated with that evening to ask them to complete the template circulated by 18:00 on Sunday 19th April. This contact was done with the assistance of HIQA and the Mental Health Commission (MHC). A phone line and email address was provided over the weekend to provide assistance to the Person-in Charge to fill out required template. There was a strong response at 89.7%. The findings from this census will be presented to NPHEt at their meeting on 28 April.

5. Mental Health Update

At the meeting on 15th April, an update was provided to the subgroup regarding a new initiative for mental well-being, launched this week - www.gov.ie/together. Covid-19 is a significant source of stress for people, and the focus of the initiative is on coping, staying at home, looking after mental well-being. The DOH is working with media to gain awareness country wide, including a focus on RTE TV and radio for those who cannot access online media. Many resources have been made available, such as apps around 'keeping connected'.

6. Communications –Sheila Caulfield, D/Health

Work is ongoing on the communication plan with a coordinated approach between the Department and HSE Communications Team. Key actions this week include:

- National advertising campaign –social distancing – hand washing – cocooning.
- Press campaign – shopping – community response – TV ads.
- National advertising (TV/Radio/social media) on the 'Still Here' campaign on domestic violence supports.
- Research is being looked at, especially about cocooning, and will be shared with members.
- A number of materials have generated high demand, including easy read guides.
- A number of Dementia resources have also been developed.