



Mr. Paul Reid,
Chief Executive Officer & Chair HSE National Crisis Management Team (NCMT),
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Via email to: ceo.office@hse.ie

Dear Paul,

Arising from today's meeting of the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE), I wish to bring to your attention, as Chair of the HSE NCMT, a series of decisions of the NPHE which now require to be actioned by the HSE and Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC):

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, while recognising the HSE's significant work in developing a Public Health Pandemic Workforce Plan and in particular its work to augment the Department of Public Health in the East, the NPHE recommended the HSE take all necessary measures to support Departments of Public Health in continuing to respond comprehensively to cases and clusters over the coming weeks.

While considering the future, longer term responses to COVID-19, the NPHE recommended that the Department of Health and the HSE engage proactively in relation to the implementation of the HSE Public Health Pandemic Workforce Plan and relevant priority recommendations in the *Report on the Role, Training and Career Structures of Public Health Physicians in Ireland* with a view to the implementation of a sustainable plan for the future of public health.

In light of the apparent weekend effect in the pattern of reporting of cases which appears to have emerged over recent weeks, the NPHE recommended that all aspects of the testing, tracing and



reporting pathway are sufficiently resourced over the coming bank-holiday weekend and future weekends to enable as close to real-time reporting and follow-up of cases as possible, so as to ensure continued accurate understanding of the current epidemiological position.

The NPHET 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 NPHET 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.

Data for the majority of these indicators is already collected and reported and I would like to thank colleagues across the HSE for their continued efforts in providing detailed and timely information. For those indicators where data are not currently readily available, the NPHET recommended the HSE puts in place arrangements for new data collection and/or reporting mechanisms where appropriate and ensures that data are available at sub-national level where identified. Data should be made available to the Department of Health and should also be made available to HSE regional public health teams as appropriate to enable local and regional planning and response.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the wider team across the HSE for your ongoing support and work across the health and social care services as we move through the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency. Officials from this Department have been and continue to be available to work with relevant HSE staff.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Róisín Glynn

A/Chief Medical Officer

Chair of the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency Team

cc. Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer, HSE
Mr Liam Woods, National Director, Acute Hospital Operations, HSE