



Mr. Paul Reid,  
Chief Executive Officer & Chair HSE National Crisis Management Team (NCMT),  
Health Services Executive,  
Dr Steevens' Hospital,  
Dublin 8,  
D08 W2A8

5<sup>th</sup> August 2020

*Via email to: [ceo.office@hse.ie](mailto:ceo.office@hse.ie)*

Dear Paul,

Arising from yesterday's meeting of the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE), and in light of the recent increase in outbreaks across vulnerable populations and workplaces, 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):

- The NPHE recommends, subject to completion of preparatory planning at a national level, the HSE implement a programme of fortnightly serial testing, on a voluntary basis, in conjunction with representative groups and SafetyNet where appropriate, for persons living in Direct Provision centers, and homeless and Roma living in congregated settings.
- With regard to high risk workplace settings, in particular food processing and construction sectors, the NPHE recommends that public health teams should continue adopt a rapid, robust and comprehensive public health response to cases in these high risk settings, and should apply a very low threshold for mass testing of employees in such settings once an initial case is identified (subject to public health risk assessment).
- The NPHE recommends, in line with the recommendations of the National Outbreak Control Team (NOCT), the establishment of a National Standing Oversight Committee on COVID-19 for food processing plants to maintain an ongoing review of the impact of COVID-19 on this industry, to be available to update guidelines and to oversee the establishment of a follow-up NOCT in the event of any resurgence of outbreaks. The experience of COVID-19 as it relates to this industry will be considered further at NPHE's meeting this Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> August.

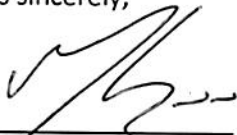
In recognition of the requirement for cross-Government action, the NPHE has today also recommended:

- the immediate establishment of a cross-Government mechanism to coordinate sustained support for those that are vulnerable, and others disproportionately impacted by the pandemic;
- the full reinstitution by the HSE along with other relevant agencies of the set of cross-Government protective measures previously employed for those in vulnerable groups;

- using experience to date, the development and/or enhancement of multi-agency, multi-disciplinary plans by the HSE along with other relevant agencies to protect the most vulnerable from the disease across health and other settings;
- regulatory bodies across all sectors should utilise their legal standards, assurance and enforcement powers to support comprehensive national and local responses where cases/clusters occur.

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 Ronan 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