

30 April 2020

Dear Provider,

I hope that this letter finds you well in these unprecedented times.

As you will be aware from our previous communications with you, our priority throughout the COVID-19 pandemic remains the safety and wellbeing of people using health and social care services. We in HIQA recognise that all health and social care providers are working very hard during this challenging time, and be assured that we continue to be here to support you. Now more than ever it is important that people using services still receive safe, high-quality care.

You have all been receiving individual support and advice from our inspectors and I want to assure you that this will continue. Please remember to maintain contact with your named inspector or contact point within HIQA, or get in touch with HIQA's Infection Prevention and Control Hub to access expert advice on infection prevention and control measures when caring for a resident with confirmed or suspected COVID-19.

While routine inspections have been postponed, HIQA is monitoring services remotely and continues to review and risk assess all information we receive about services; this helps us ensure that we target our resources where they are most needed. As you are by now aware, HIQA has had to update regulatory notifications to provide assistance to health and social care services during this national crisis. The Chief Inspector, Mary Dunnion, has issued a series of regulatory notices providing information and updates to all services under HIQA's remit, while her team is carrying out weekly quality assurance checks with all registered providers. I want to thank you for your flexibility and your assistance in implementing our revised processes.

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The regulatory assessment framework announced by the Minister for Health Simon Harris will assist providers of centres that currently have no COVID-19 positive residents to prepare for a possible outbreak, and includes a checklist for providers to self-assess their current infection prevention and control plans, and where necessary, to put in place additional supports.

As part of the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET) and its subgroups we are endeavouring to use our knowledge as a regulator and quality improvement authority to inform decisions on national policy and guidance. We have also developed an escalation pathway so that any concerns relating to COVID-19 raised by services are brought to the HSE to ensure that they are aware of the needs and requirements of services working to provide essential care to vulnerable citizens.

I want to reiterate that HIQA is here to be of whatever assistance and help that you, your staff and the people using your services require. These are extremely difficult times for everybody, but I sincerely believe that by cooperating and working together we can continue to protect people and provide them with the best-possible care.

Yours sincerely,



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**PHELIM QUINN**  
Chief Executive

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