

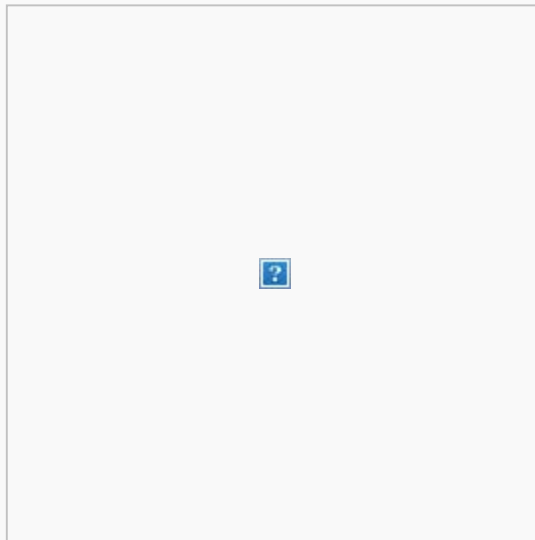
From: Fiona Kenny
Subject: COVID-19 / Coronavirus Update
Date: Thursday 12 March 2020 16:40:28

Dear Colleague,

Please see communication (below) that was issued to our members this afternoon to keep you informed.

Kind regards,
Fiona Kenny
EA to CEO

[View this email in your browser](#)



Dear Member,

We are taking this opportunity to inform you regarding a few important matters relating to Covid-19 / Coronavirus.

- **Essential Workers**
- **Guidance on discharges and transfers**
- **Contingency Planning**
- **PPE**
- **Irish Association of Funeral Directors Guidance**
- **Finance/Banks**
- **Video guides**
- **SC Resources HSE & HP**

Please note, we are in continuous contact with the Department of Health and HSE and are committed to providing members with continued updates as appropriate.

Essential Workers

We have written to the Department of Health seeking clarification for issue to the sector to ensure nursing homes are in a position to maintain staffing levels now and into the future. We have sought clarity regarding guidance issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) expert advisory group with regard to managing healthcare workers who are in close contact with confirmed cases of the virus.

The [Irish Times](#) reported last Saturday advice from the NPHE: **"The advice noted that if a health facility cannot be staffed safely to provide critical services, those who have had close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus and have developed symptoms should be excluded from work. It added that staff who have not developed symptoms, and are deemed essential workers, may continue to work provided they observe infection prevention and control precautions and undergo active monitoring twice daily for 14 days after contact with a confirmed case."**

Guidance on discharges and transfers

[We issued HSE guidance on Tuesday evening](#). Since issued, we have had several queries and we are consulting with the Nursing Committee and SM Consulting with regard to questions raised for nursing homes. We will be sending further queries on this guidance to the HSE to ensure a consistent approach. We hope to have further information following conference call with Dr Siobhán Kennelly, National Clinical & Advisory Group Lead Older Persons HSE.

Contingency Planning

We have sought specific contingency planning guidance from the Department of Health. The nursing home sector requires sector-specific advice and guidance on contingency planning in the event that a resident and/or staff member is suspected or confirmed to have the Covid-19 virus. NHI and members require a clear public health-led protocol to refer to in the event of the virus entering a nursing home. Such protocols should be led by public health advices and the NPHE vulnerable persons subcommittee. As you are aware, to date our advices and guidance has been focussed on protection, prevention and risk assessment.

PPE

The HSE has informed NHI it has supplies of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and will make equipment available to nursing homes through its crisis management teams at local level, as appropriate. Our engagement with the HSE and Department of Health has advanced it is imperative supplies are

secured to ensure there is sufficient amount to support private and voluntary nursing homes managing any prospective Coronavirus outbreaks. Our representations in this regard continue.

Irish Association of Funeral Directors Guidance

The Association issued guidance to its members. It informs it is currently awaiting guidelines from the relevant health authorities, and in the interim, it is recommending that the following protocols are followed in the event of arranging a funeral for someone who has died from COVID-19. [Read the guidelines here.](#)

Finance/Banks

We have contacted Bank of Ireland, AIB and Ulster Bank and they have plans in place to support the sector during this crisis. The banks confirm that they are actively engaged with their customers within the nursing home sector and will continue to keep close contact over the coming weeks and months to ensure flexibility of financing arrangements where required.

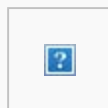
Video guides

The HPSC has uploaded a series of video guides for health staff, with them including a video titled *Preventing the spread of infection - guidance for non-clinical health service staff*. [You can access the videos here.](#)

HSE & HPSC Resources

HSE and Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) Coronavirus guidance for health professionals is being updated on a consistent basis, with the last update today 12th March. Click here to access [HSE specific guidance](#) and click here to access [HPSC guidance](#).

Yours,
Tadhg Daly,
Chief Executive Officer



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Our mailing address is:

info@nhi.ie

Our contact number is:

+353 (0)1 4699800

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