

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Stephen Donnelly TD  
Minister for Health  
Department of Health  
Block 1 Miesian Plaza  
50-58 Lower Baggot St  
Dublin 2

10 February 2021

Ref: PQ/EMcC/SD/20210210

Dear Minister,

**Re: Ministerial Directions under Section 29 Health Act 2007 as amended  
(the 2007 Act) (Section 29 Directions)**

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 4 February 2021 and the Ministerial directions issued under Section 29 of the 2007 Act requiring HIQA to comply with the following;

1. Provide a *"full report of the risk assessment completed by the Chief Inspector on 26 November 2020 including relevant service details (e.g. risk profile and status) for the purpose of ensuring it is available to the HSE"*

I note that the report and associated information are required for the purpose of ensuring a coordinated national approach to the COVID-19 response, as regards the safe delivery of services during the pandemic. In accordance with Section 29(2) of the 2007 Act, I now enclose the full November 2020 report detailing nursing homes at potential risk should they have a COVID-19 outbreak. This report includes statutory, voluntary and private nursing homes and reflect the regulatory information available on each centre at that time

Since this risk assessment, a number of additional nursing homes have had COVID-19 outbreaks. Some of these centres were unable to effectively manage and control the outbreak and as a consequence required significant public health, regulatory and HSE support.

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In the vast majority of these centres, the deficits identified again include:

- Insufficient base staffing levels
- Standalone registered providers with limited inbuilt resilience and peer support
- Ineffective governance (management and clinical) arrangements
- Poor infection prevention and control practices commensurate with relevant HPSC guidance

In accordance with Ministerial direction, I will simultaneously furnish this report to the HSE in accordance with Section 38 of the 2007 Act.

Yours sincerely,



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**PHELIM QUINN**  
**Chief Executive**

Cc. Mary Dunnion, Chief Inspector of Social Services, Director of Regulation  
Yvonne O'Neill, Interim National Director of Community Operations, HSE

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Regulatory assessment of a designated centre's potential risk in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak

Explanation

Column L - Risk Profile (Overall regulatory compliance)	Risk level assigned
This section presents the baseline risk level assigned to a centre reflecting the totality of the information we hold pertaining to a centre (inspection activity, notifications and unsolicited information). The higher the number the greater the risk	
Green	1
Yellow	2
Orange	3
Red	4

Column M - Number of Beds	Risk level assigned
Our experience to date is that the smaller the centre the greater the impact of a COVID-19 outbreak. This section quantifies the risk according to the size of the centre with smaller centres allocated a higher risk rating.	
09 - 40	
41 - 100	
101 +	1

Column N - Regulatory Risk	Risk level assigned
This section quantifies the risk according to non-compliance with key regulations before the onset of the current public health emergency and the resources available to individual centres. Where a centre has a good regulatory history and access to the resources of a wider group the identified risk is lower. Where a centre has a poor regulatory history and no access to the resources of a wider group the identified risk is higher	
The provider of the centre has access to the resources of a wider group and the centre has a good regulatory history	1
The provider of the centre does not have access to the resources of a wider group and the centre has a good regulatory history	2
The provider of the centre has access to the resources of a wider group but the centre has a history of two or more non-compliances across 6 key regulations	3
The provider of the centre does not have access to the resources of a wider group and had a history of two or more non-compliances across 6 key regulations	4
A number of centres are deemed to be at high risk based on additional information that we hold through a review of the available information	5

Column O and Column P - Total Risk Score and Overall Potential Risk level	Overall potential risk level
Accepting that risk is multifactorial and dynamic the above three categories were combined to build a risk profile pertinent to nursing home risk in the context of the current public health emergency and present the risk as low, medium or high as requested by Minister Donnelly	
A centre with a total score of 1 – 6 is more likely to have the ability and the support to identify, manage and control an outbreak of COVID-19 and is thereby classed as a low risk	Low
A centre with a total score of 7 - 10 will have greater inbuilt resilience to identify, manage and control an outbreak of COVID-19 and some access to external supports but may still require low level external support hereby classed as a medium risk	Medium
A centre with a total score of 11 - 14 will be challenged to identify, manage and control an outbreak of COVID-19 and is likely to require significant external supports in the event of an outbreak. Such centres are classified as high risk	High





































































