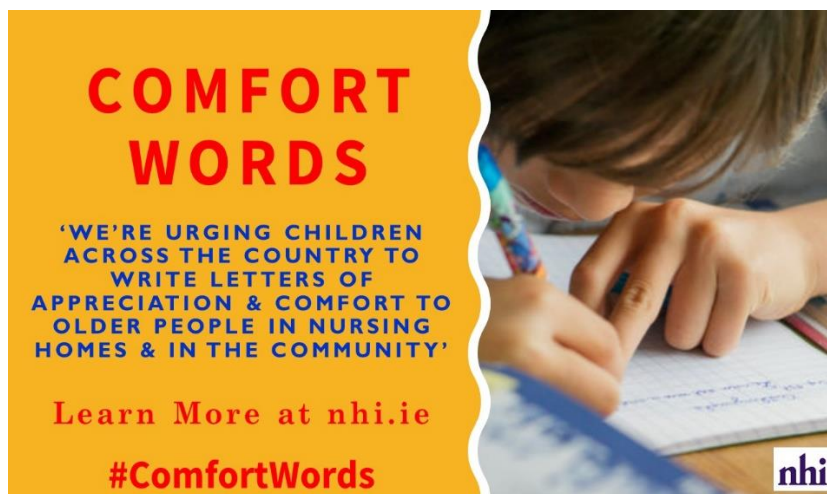
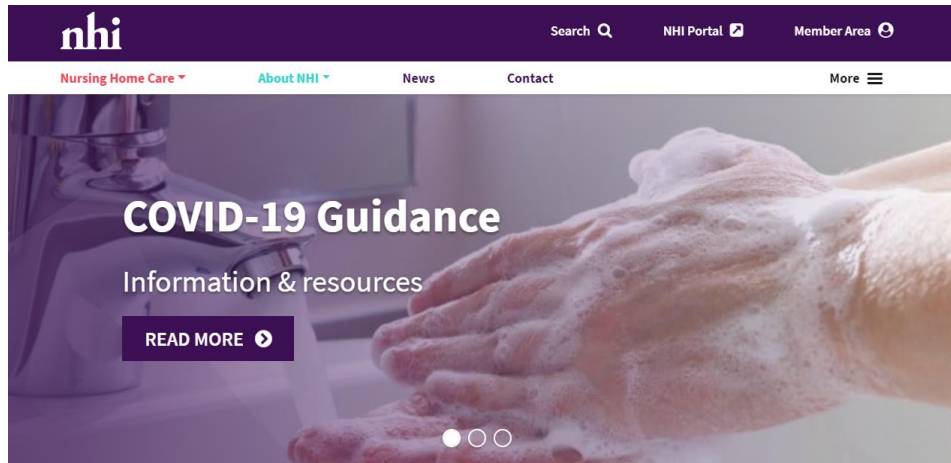


NHI.IE – Your online resource for Covid-19 guidance

Visit the dedicated Covid-19 section of the NHI website for a raft of resources and guidance specific to support nursing homes. The website is being updated on a continuous basis to guide nursing homes during this public health emergency.



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Meeting with Minister for Health Simon Harris

We are meeting with Minister for Health Simon Harris this coming Monday, 30th March, to present to him the huge challenges now facing private and voluntary nursing homes. Within previous Updates we have informed we view it as imperative the Minister meets with NHI to be informed of such. Critical challenges presenting that will be brought before the Minister will principally be:

- Access to PPE and specialist equipment
- Staffing constraints upon our sector and requirement for the State to desist from depleting private and voluntary nursing homes of staff
- Requirement to recognise Covid-19 is having huge cost implications for every nursing homes and this must be recognised in enhanced funding for the Fair Deal scheme or emergency funding

Representation to Inter-Agency Working Group

We previously informed the Department of Health is leading an Inter-Agency Working Group on the Nursing Home Sector with regard to Covid-19. NHI submitted to the Working Group yesterday. We have advanced:

- There is an immediate requirement on the Government to formally designate the private and voluntary nursing home sector as a 'critical/frontline sector'.
- We cannot countenance nursing homes not being appropriately supported by the State in providing specialised, round-the-clock care to thousands of people in our communities during this national health emergency.
- Not enough attention is being paid to the specific risks and issues that will arise for residents in public, private and voluntary nursing homes.
- There is an immediate requirement for a commitment by Government to additional funding for Fair Deal to meet the increased cost of care for nursing residents in meeting the care needs and addressing the challenges. Huge cost implications present for nursing homes from a staffing and logistical perspective in the management of Covid-19. The State has to recognise such in the provision of emergency funding to maintain the vital community services provided by nursing homes.
- The diminishment of our sector's workforce will threaten the ability of nursing homes to provide care during this health pandemic and this is something we must not countenance.
- Nursing home staff are on the frontline in healthcare provision and priority testing for their healthcare workers must be prioritised.
- The HSE must ensure an appropriate supply of equipment is allocated to private and voluntary nursing homes to ensure they are appropriately equipped to manage this unprecedented health emergency.
- Recommendations presented have included:
 - Protocol and contingency planning

- Mutual aid planning
- Priority testing for staff and residents
- Commitment to provide necessary supports that include PPE and oxygen
- Explicit written commitment that the HSE will not recruit from our sector
- Commitment from NTPF to continue to engage with Registered Providers, renew deeds of agreement and not ‘roll over’ on existing terms.
- Challenges presently presenting are also presented, including:
 - Staffing
 - €350 Covid-19 unemployment payment acting as a deterrent for prospective employees
 - Provision of PPE
 - Reduced short-stays in nursing homes and private payers
 - Reduction in Fair Deal resident contributions and fees payable for ancillary services

NHI’s engagement with the Working Group will be ongoing in the weeks ahead and we will keep nursing homes updated.

[Read our submission in full here](#)

Representation to HSE CEO Paul Reid

Our Covid-19 Updates are informing of continued representations to the HSE and engagement with regard to addressing the huge challenges presented. Yesterday we followed up with CEO Paul Reid to advance not enough attention is being paid to the specific risks and issues that will arise for residents in both public and private nursing homes. We stated further engagement and HSE commitment is required with regard to:

- PPE provision and arrangements
- Nursing home specific guidance
- Staffing
- HSE support for outbreaks
- Protocol and contingency planning for outbreak
- Mutual aid planning, including sharing of the workforce
- Resilience planning, including shared usage of local resources

Our representations to the HSE are continuous and we will update nursing homes in this regard.

Representation to HIQA

We have written to HIQA to express concern not enough attention is being paid to the specific risks and issues that arise for residents in nursing homes because of Covid-19. HIQA is a member of the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET) and there are a number of issues in the private and voluntary nursing home that require immediate attention. We have advanced there is requirement for enhanced engagement between nursing homes and the regulator regarding the key challenges being faced by providers.

Representation to TDs & Health Spokespersons – Utilise to inform your local TDs!

We have provided every TD and Senator with a Nursing Homes Ireland Covid-19 briefing. It informs 460+ private and voluntary nursing homes provide highly specialised clinical, health and social care on a 24/7 basis to 25,000 people across Ireland and those availing of it are amongst the most vulnerable. We ask our national representatives to support our sector as it faces unprecedented challenges. “Insufficient support from the State during this health pandemic cannot be countenanced,” we state.

Within the Briefing, we inform of four headline challenge now presenting for our nursing homes:

- Access to PPE
- Staffing
- Unemployed Payment
- Funding

We urge nursing homes to ensure your local TDs are informed regarding the critical challenges that now present for you during a national health emergency. You are on the frontline in healthcare delivery and we cannot countenance the State not providing our sector with sufficient support during Covid-19.

[Our Briefing to TD’s can be downloaded here and you can utilise it in representations to your local TDs.](#)

Pronouncement of death arrangements – Guidance & Protocols awaited

The HSE are finalising guidance and protocols re pronouncement of death in nursing homes during Covid-19. This is being sought undertaken arising from queries regarding the certification of RIPs within nursing homes during Covid-19. Coroner’s correspondence has suggested GPs may not be required to certify RIP during the Covid-19 presenting.

We have informed the HSE we have received a large volume of calls from Members in this regard and require clarity ASAP.

This HSE national policy states that nurse need to have completed training on pronouncement of expected death on HSELand. NHI Members are still to be afforded full access to HSELand (this is pending). The policy also states that in order for a nurse to pronounce death that the resident needs to have been seen by a GP in the previous 14 Days and forms are to be completed and signed by GP. However, an issues arising is in this present time, not all residents are being seen by GP’s. In the case of an unexpected death, nursing homes need commitment from GP/ coroner and clear guidance.

We have been informed by the Department of Health that it did provide instruction to GP’s with regard to RIP’s occurring during Covid-19. The instruction informs: “All medical practitioners in Ireland are required to notify to the Medical Officer of Health in their local Public Health Department of all deaths that have a laboratory confirmed COVID-19

diagnosis. The local Public Health Department will notify these deaths to the Health Protection Surveillance Centre. You should also seek to ensure that the Public Health department is aware of possible suspicious deaths where there was not a test pre-mortem. You will also need to make the local coroner aware as per the local arrangements.”

Media – Broadcast & print coverage

CEO Tadhg Daly appeared on Today with Seán O’Rourke today, Friday 27th March, to inform regarding the challenges being presented to nursing homes during Covid-19 and the requirement to State to support our sector during this national emergency. [Listen to his interview here.](#)

[Click here to read Irish Daily Mail article that encompassed interview with CEO Tadhg Daly, in which he presented Minister for Health Simon Harris must engage with our sector.](#)

[Also within the Mail, provider Valerie Joy informed regarding the pressures being faced by individual nursing homes.](#)

[Click to read article in Irish Examiner on Thursday: Harris not engaging with nursing homes](#)

This evening, Tadhg undertook an interview for Newstalk’s The Hard Shoulder. We will circulate the interview when available.

Furthermore, engagement has been undertaken today with the Irish Times and the Sunday Independent to inform their weekend coverage.

Clarity: Asymptomatic healthcare workers

We are providing clarity with regard to asymptomatic healthcare workers presenting they have Covid-19 or prospective symptoms. You are reminded of the previously circulated [HSE Interim Guidance for Coronavirus - Healthcare Worker Management By Occupational Health Version 8.](#)

It states:

9.1. Derogation of ‘Essential’ HCWs

‘Essential’ HCWs, may be allowed to return to work with twice daily monitoring,

9.1.1.during their 14 day monitoring period based on the documents ‘**Summary of Advice for Healthcare Workers (HCW) for Close Contacts and returning HCWs**’

Management must identify HCWs they deem ‘essential’ due to service needs and

9.1.2.they may provide derogation for their return.

PPE Equipment

You are reminded of email issued yesterday: [Covid-19: Update re access to PPE](#)

The email informed the HSE is establishing a National PPE Response Team to manage all inbound and outbound deliveries. This will involve daily scheduled stock deliveries to points of care. A communication will be issued shortly from the Response Team that will outline the process for scheduled and unscheduled deliveries.

[Click here to read letter from the HSE regarding pragmatic use and prioritisation of PPE.](#)

The HSE informs the information is recommended until a more plentiful supply is available for dispersion. The letter provides guidance regarding:

- Reducing risk of exposure
- Substituting Items of PPE
- Extended use of PPE
- Reprocessing of PPE
- Conserving and optimising use
- Distribution of PPE

Department of Health Covid-19 Support Resources

Update re resources to support you in promoting Covid-19 awareness:

Digital Partner Pack Update

The digital partner pack now includes the COVID-19 Information Booklet, which is being delivered to all households from this week onward. You can download the booklet [here](#)

The COVID-19 Information Booklet is also available in Irish and in audiobook and the Department are working to make it available in a number of languages and formats.

For the most up to date information and advice on Coronavirus, please go to <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/> , [hse.ie/coronavirus](https://www.hse.ie/coronavirus) and [hpsc.ie/novelcoronavirus](https://www.hpsc.ie/novelcoronavirus) and gov.ie. Support packs are available from the Department.

Covid-19: Prescribing & Microbiology Webinars

The All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care is collaborating with Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services and Tallaght University Hospital to deliver Project ECHO AIIHPC webinars to provide information and guidance to nursing homes during the COVID-19 outbreak. The webinar is being supported by NHI, the HSE and Irish Hospice Foundation.

The following sessions will last a maximum of one hour on the following dates and will include a presentation and a discussion session:

- Tuesday 31 March at 2.30pm – Anticipatory Prescribing and related issues led by Dr Cliona Lorton, Palliative Medicine Consultant, Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services. Please use this link to register your attendance
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8X5KsQ8mSI6R3XHzhqm_ew
- Thursday 2 April at 2.30pm – Dr Anna-Rose Prior, Consultant Microbiologist, Tallaght University Hospital – Latest guidance from Clinical Microbiology. Please use this link to register your attendance:
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Epn3RWj4TFCIKmly2RDMAw

Please note you will need to register for each session separately and once you are registered you will receive an email with the zoom line details. The session will be hosted in Zoom which can be downloaded onto your computers, iPad or smart phones or accessed via a phone line. If you have any issues with registering please contact info@aaihpc.org

Sanitisation equipment

NHI Procurement Partner First Choice Purchasing has secured additional stock of key products from one of their suppliers with details below. FCP confirm that they are actively engaged on additional supplies from other sources.

Product Details

- Packs of 1 x 100 sanitising wipes
- Packs of 1 x 800 sanitising wipes
- 16 x 1 litre sanitiser each case comes with 4 x pumps
- 400ml bottle of sanitiser 75% alcohol 24 in a case

Homes can contact any of the following Support numbers :

Head office:
FCP 021 2390060

National Sales Manager
David Reynolds - 086 4669125

Business Development Managers:
Pat Galvin – 086 0440594
Stephen Muldowney – 086 7941735
Stephen McGeough – 086 0111303

Covid-19 HSE Webinar: Thursday 26th March 2020

Slides from the HSE Webinar will be provided by the HSE and we will circulate to all nursing homes when they become available.

PROMOTE nhirecruitment.ie

You are reminded yesterday, Tuesday 24th March, NHI went 'live' with <https://nhirecruitment.ie/>. We're urging you to promote the website that allows unemployed people to register their interest in fulfilling roles within NHI Member homes during the Covid-19 emergency.

You can utilise the promo image below for utilisation on your website and social media channels. We hope the new portal will support Members in filling key roles and support your staffing complement during the emergency. [Download the image here.](#)



Life stories & reminiscence resources

The Dementia Services Information and Development Centre has added two new resources to its website that provide suggestions and ideas for people with dementia and their care partners. Life Story and Reminiscence.

[Download its life story template here](#)

[Download its reminiscence template here](#)

More resources are available by visiting dementia.ie

Age Action supports

Age Action has written to NHI to inform it has reconfigured it's supports and services with view to ensuring it stays connected to members, partners and those who use its programmes. [Details here](#).

Postcards of appreciation for nursing home residents

[The Anonymous Postcard Project](#) would like to run a campaign to help the public -- especially children -- send postcards of appreciation and support to residents of nursing homes in Ireland.

How it works:

1. People fill out a form on the web site.
2. The postcards are printed with photo and message and then mailed to nursing home
3. Photos & messages from the postcards are then posted on The Anonymous Postcard Project blog and promoted on social media

What is wanted from nursing homes:

- Permission to send postcards to your facility (email to admin@anonpostcardproject.org)
- Feedback on the example web form for people to send a paper or online postcard
- Any suggestions to make this campaign more valuable to you and your residents. For example, for people who choose to send only virtual postcards, would it be helpful for me to email you PDFs to print? [example postcard PDF]

Thank you to our Nursing Committee!

We take this opportunity to thank NHI National Nursing Committee for their tremendous support in recent weeks. We appreciate Committee Members have been under huge pressure in meeting the challenges presented within their own homes and thank them for the time they have given to NHI and Members to support us in providing guidance, advice and support. Thank you!