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**National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) - Coronavirus**  
**Re: Covid-19 NPHE Subgroup - Vulnerable People**

4<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

Dear Mr Quinn

I am writing to you to seek your organisation's nomination to membership of a subgroup of the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) – Covid 19.

NPHE is the mechanism for overseeing the health sector response to significant health-based emergencies. It facilitates the sharing of information between the Department of Health and its agencies and provides a forum for agreement as to strategic approaches to such emergencies. NPHE will oversee and provide direction, guidance, support and expert advice across the health service and the wider public service, for the overall national response to Coronavirus, including national and regional and other outbreak control arrangements.

NPHE, which I chair, meets weekly to assess the international data, receive guidance regarding the outbreak and to review Ireland's ongoing preparedness in line with advice from the WHO and the ECDC.

Government are convening a Senior Officials Group and Cabinet Committee specifically to deal with Covid-19. The NPHE Subgroup - Vulnerable People will provide oversight and assurance with regard to the specific preparedness, measures and actions that need to be taken to protect vulnerable groups and individuals in society, reporting directly to the NPHE.

Membership of the subgroup will include officials from a wide range of Government Departments, Agencies and specialists.

Dr Kathleen Mac Lellan, Assistant Secretary, Social Care Division, has been assigned as Chair to the subgroup, and will attend meetings of NPHE.

The first meeting of the subgroup will take place on **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 11am in the Department of Health, Miesian Plaza, 50 - 58 Lower Baggot Street.**

I would be grateful if you would forward on the name and contact details of your nominee to the subgroup, as a matter of urgency, to [david\\_o'connor@health.gov.ie](mailto:david_o'connor@health.gov.ie)

A copy of the Terms of Reference and proposed Membership of the Subgroup, are attached for your information.

Your assistance in this matter is very much appreciated

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Holdhan', written in a cursive style.

Dr Tony Holdhan  
Chief Medical Officer  
Chair NPHE

## **COVID-19 NPHEP Subgroup - Vulnerable People**

### **04/03/2020**

The **NPHEP Subgroup - Vulnerable People** will provide oversight and assurance with regard to the specific preparedness, measures and actions that need to be taken to protect vulnerable groups and individuals in society. An integrated cross government approach will be taken by the Subgroup.

The term vulnerable people is being used to include older people, people with a disability, mental health service users, those with an underlying illness or condition, children in care and those accessing social inclusion services (not an exhaustive list).

Services to vulnerable people are provided through a range of settings and are under the remit of a number of Government Departments. These settings include long and short-term care, respite, day services, prisons and youth detention centres, direct provision and care in individual homes (not an exhaustive list).

#### **Terms of Reference**

1. Identify categories of vulnerable people
2. Identify State Agencies responsible for service provision
3. Design a standardised checklist to provide assurance that measures are in place, updated in line with NPHEP directions, approved at appropriate senior level<sup>1</sup> and implemented. Such measures are likely to include:
  - Guidance for service users, families and staff
  - Communications plan
  - Compliance with data protection regulations
  - Preparedness plan to include containment measures; mitigation measures; hand hygiene, personal protective equipment (PPE) and waste management; environmental cleaning; patient/people placement where relevant - moving of patients/people in the facility, visitor access
  - Capacity Contingency Plan
  - Business Continuity Plan.
4. Establish communication processes for completed standardised checklist to the Subgroup
5. Design the Subgroup Assurance Framework
6. Agree Subgroup Modus Operandi
7. Report to NPHEP:
  - Progress Updates
  - Escalation of high risks as appropriate.

#### **Membership Sub-Group**

- Department of Health (Chair)
- Department Justice and Equality
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government/ Local Government Management Agency
- Department of Education
- HSE – Community Operations
- Public Health Specialist(s) (HSE)
- Voluntary Sector representative
- Patient Representative
- Regulator(s)
- Department of Health

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<sup>1</sup> Responsibility to ensure that all content and actions are in line with NPHEP directions lies with the relevant Departments/Agencies.

## **Covid-19 NPHET Subgroup - Vulnerable People**

### **Proposed Membership**

Department of Health (Chair)

Department Justice and Equality

Department of Children and Youth Affairs

Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

Local Government Management Agency,

Department of Education and Skills

David Walsh, National Director Community Operations - Health Service

Dr Margaret Fitzgerald, Public Health Specialist

Sean Moynihan, CEO, ALone

Bridget Doherty, Patient Representative

Health Information and Quality Authority,

Dr Caitriona McCarthy,  
Consultant in Public Health Medicine