

**From:** Kathleen\_MacLellan@health.gov.ie  
**To:** [Chief Inspector](#)  
**Cc:** [Phelim Quinn](#); [Niall\\_Redmond@health.gov.ie](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Failure by your Department and the HSE to meaningfully support our Elderly Population in Nursing Homes during Covid 19  
**Date:** Monday 13 April 2020 08:20:17

---

Mary

Please see email below. The NH below was in contact with the Department on Saturday and David Walsh provided a detailed outline of supports being provided the HSE including additional staff, public health support and ongoing contact. A further email was received by the Department last night (below). I have referred this email to David Walsh this morning and I am also referring it to HIQA in light of the risks being raised. I would be grateful for your early review of the email.

Many thanks

**Kathleen**

**Dr Kathleen Mac Lellan**  
*Assistant Secretary, Social Care Division*

**An Roinn Sláinte**  
Department of Health

**Bloc 1, Plaza Miesach, 50 - 58 Sráid Bhagóid Íochtarach, Baile Átha Cliath, D02 XW14**  
Block 1, Miesian Plaza, 50 - 58 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin, D02 XW14

Designated Public Official under Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015

----- Forwarded by Kathleen MacLellan/SLAINTE on 13/04/2020 08:16 -----

**From:** Kathleen MacLellan/SLAINTE  
**To:** [communityoperations@hse.e](#), [david.walsh1@hse.ie](#)  
**Cc:** [Niall\\_Redmond/SLAINTE@SLAINTE](#)  
**Date:** 13/04/2020 08:16  
**Subject:** Fw: Failure by your Department and the HSE to meaningfully support our Elderly Population in Nursing Homes during Covid 19

---

**David**

**Please see below which was received by the Department last night. I am aware of the HSE's operation's support and public health contact for this nursing home as outlined in your detailed email on Saturday. Can you please provide a further update with regard to the issues and risks raised below by the NH owner?**

**In addition, in light of HIQA's regulatory role for registered centres such as this private nursing home and their active engagement through the HIQA IPC Hub and risk assessment with long term care centres I am referring this email to HIQA as well.**

Many thanks

Kathleen

**Dr Kathleen Mac Lellan**  
*Assistant Secretary, Social Care Division*

**An Roinn Sláinte**  
Department of Health

**Bloc 1, Plaza Miesach, 50 - 58 Sráid Bhagóid Íochtarach, Baile Átha Cliath, D02 XW14**  
Block 1, Miesian Plaza, 50 - 58 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin, D02 XW14

Designated Public Official under Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015

----- Forwarded by Kathleen MacLellan/SLAINTE on 13/04/2020 08:11 -----

From: Tony Holohan/SLAINTE  
To: Kathleen MacLellan/SLAINTE@SLAINTE  
Cc: NPH ETCV/SLAINTE@SLAINTE  
Date: 12/04/2020 22:26  
Subject: Fwd: Failure by your Department and the HSE to meaningfully support our Elderly Population in Nursing Homes during Covid 19

---

Kathleen  
See below. And attached.

Tony

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Date:** 12 April 2020 at 20:47:55 GMT+1  
**To:** "simon\_harris@health.gov.ie" <simon\_harris@health.gov.ie>  
**Cc:** "tony\_holohan@health.gov.ie" <tony\_holohan@health.gov.ie> [REDACTED]

**Subject: Failure by your Department and the HSE to meaningfully support our Elderly Population in Nursing Homes during Covid 19**

Dear Minister Harris,

RTE recently reported that 56% of Covid 19 deaths in Ireland had occurred in Nursing Homes. I fear that when the history of Ireland's Covid 19 pandemic is written, the failure to adequately support nursing homes during the month of March and up to the current

time, will have resulted in multiple avoidable deaths and will be identified as the greatest tragedy of the pandemic. We are said to be “all in this together” but we feel strongly that Ireland’s most vulnerable and concentrated group, the over 25,000 residents of nursing homes, have been and continue to be neglected by your Department and the HSE. We cherish our elderly people and feel they are being badly let down by the State. Let me illustrate through the experience of [REDACTED] and its [REDACTED] residents [REDACTED].

Since the first Covid 19 case was confirmed in Ireland, management and staff of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] have focused all their effort on keeping the virus out of the nursing home and followed all advice coming from the Public Health experts. Our staff are skilled in successfully controlling infections such as the seasonal flu and vomiting bugs but unfortunately in this case, we were unsuccessful and with tragic results. We have had 6 deaths to date and have at least 15 other residents with symptoms of the virus. In other words, we have a major outbreak.

Our staff have been decimated. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] No other staff member has received a test result so it is possible that some of them do not have the virus and are unnecessarily absent from work, thus exacerbating a desperate staffing shortage. It was not our experience that health care workers were prioritised for testing and it appears that prioritisation only applied to the HSE.

We are desperately short of nurses and on occasions have only had one nurse on night duty, dealing with 80 residents some of whom are very ill. Our Deputy Director of Nursing is trying to source nurses and other staff, is herself filling gaps in the roster and doing medicine rounds. She is totally absorbed in what remains our first priority, trying to ensure basic health and personal care for our residents in the teeth of this outbreak.

We have tried to access the HSE staffing support promised by your Department and have received the assistance of only 1 Nurse and 2 HCW’s. The nurse has based herself in an office, only works from 9 – 5 and told us she does not work weekends. **This is not the assistance we need.** On a number of occasions, we have been informed by a HSE liaison person that a nurse will cover a shift only to get a message later that the nurse will not be coming. We have heard that someone in the HSE informed the agency providing the nurse that the nurse was not needed in [REDACTED]. **Our experience is that the support promised from the HSE is not forthcoming and I ask you why not?.**

We urgently require from the HSE 4/5 nurses who will work 12 hour day or night shifts until our own nurses can return to work. This would enable our DDON to deal with the outbreak strategically and possibly save the lives of some residents as a result.

We are very disturbed to hear from a number of reliable sources that while we are in dire straits and our residents are dying, [REDACTED] is practically empty of patients and is fully staffed. We have also heard anecdotally, that some nurses in that facility have been told to take leave due to an insufficient workload and that they will be called if necessary. **This beggars belief!**

**My immediate and urgent appeal to you is that you look into this situation and ensure that underemployed HSE nurses are redeployed to help stem the outbreak of Covid 19 in [REDACTED] and that agency nurses at the HSE's disposal are directed towards [REDACTED]**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

Email Disclaimer and; Legal Notice: <http://health.gov.ie/email-disclaimer/>

\*\*\*\*\*