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**COVID-19 NPHET Subgroup - Vulnerable People**

**5<sup>th</sup> Meeting Report – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020**

**NPHET Meeting 03/04/2020**

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**COVID-19 NPHET Subgroup - Vulnerable People**

**1.     NPHET COVID-19 Subgroup – Vulnerable People**
The NPHET Subgroup - Vulnerable People was established to 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.

**2.     Meeting (5) 1st April 2020**
The Subgroup held its fifth meeting by teleconference on Wednesday 1 April 2020.  To note all subgroup minutes, once finalised, are available on the website at:
https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/301f5e-the-national-public-health-emergency-team-nphet-subgroup-vulnerable-/

**3.     Community Framework to support new measures**
The framework for community supports has been finalized, setting out the key role of Local Authorities (LAs) in leading the delivery of supports on the ground.  Under this framework each LA area has a COVID-19 forum to lead the co-ordination of COVID-19 community supports and resilience, including:
  • 	Working with the HSE, An Post, local community groups and local Community Welfare Office service to identify vulnerable groups and individuals in each local authority area;
  • 	Ensuring delivery of targeted social care supports and assistance to those vulnerable groups and individuals;
The HSE are represented locally on each forum.  For more details please see Appendix A.
This initiative was announced on 2nd April by the Tanaiste, Minister for Community and Rural Affairs, Minister of State for Local Government, and the CEO of Fingal County Council representing the Local Authority network.

A subgroup of the COVID-19 Senior Officials Group (SOG), chaired by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) has responsibility for the oversight of this initiative.  The Department of Health is represented on this group, with responsibility for providing public health advice and developing guidance as appropriate for the community and volunteers.

**4.     Long-term Residential Care (LTRC) and home support – public health measures**
At its meeting on 31 March, NPHET considered a set of measures aimed at residents living in Long Term Residential Care Settings (nursing homes, disability and mental health). These are a particularly vulnerable population to COVID-19 as recognised by the World Health Organisation. This is most likely due to their age, the high prevalence of underlying medical conditions and circumstances where high care support with the activities of daily living is required in collection high physical contact environments.

Following this meeting, Dr Kathleen Mac Lellan (Chair, Vulnerable People Subgroup) wrote to HSE Community Operations, HIQA, Mental Health Commission and Nursing Homes Ireland to inform them of these measures. As several of these measures were applicable to home care, letters were also sent to the umbrella organisations for the home support providers - Home Community Care Ireland (HCCI) for the provide providers and National Community Care Network (NCCN) for the voluntary sector providers.

A further paper specifically for the home support sector is being developed for discussion at the next NPHET meeting on 3 April.

**5.      Access to isolation facilities for socially vulnerable group**
As part discussions at the NPHET Subgroup on Vulnerable People meeting this week operational issues were raised around vulnerable groups, in particular for individuals who are homeless, the Roma or travellers, and access to HSE community beds and isolation facilities.  As an operational response is required, this has been referred to the chair of the HSE Vulnerable Group for follow up.

**6.      Communications**
In terms of vulnerable groups, a co- ordinated communications approach is now established between Department and HSE Comms.  This is being led by Sheila Caulfield in the Communications Team in the Department of Health. Key milestones this week include:
- ✓ National cocooning campaign
- ✓ Stakeholder email ongoing – aligned with HSE stakeholders
- ✓ Info booklet distributed- easy read version in hand – ready shortly
- ✓ Mental well-being communications campaign in development

Appendix A:                    **High Level Framework for Community Support**

**Local Authority Community Support Response to COVID-19**
**27th March 2020**

### 1. Forum membership:

The Forum will be chaired and co-ordinated by each Chief Executive (or equivalent) in each County/City Council and the membership includes the following:

- HSE
- County/City Council:   [Director of Services; SEO Community Department and Chief Officer LCDC; Communications Officer; GIS Officer (if available[1])]
- Community Champion[2]
- An Post
- Community Welfare Service
- An Garda Siochána
- Local Volunteer Centre
- Local Development Companies
- Red Cross
- Civil Defence
- GAA/IFA
- PPN
- Age Friendly Network
- Local Link
- Citizen's Information
- Alone
- Migrant Forum
- Religious

The Forum will convene as required. All meetings will be convened and operate in accordance with the most recent National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET) and HSE public health advice, including social distancing guidance. Technology should be utilised to underpin processes for community support.

### 2. Purpose of Forum

 The purpose of the Forum is to lead the co-ordination of COVID-19 community supports and resilience, including:

- Working with the HSE, An Post, local community groups and local Community Welfare Office service to identify vulnerable groups and individuals in each local authority area;
- Ensuring delivery of targeted social care supports and assistance to those vulnerable groups and individuals;

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[1] GIS supports will be centrally managed through Ordnance Survey Ireland's GeoHive platform

[2] Coordinated by The Wheel/Irish Rural Link, '**Covid Community Outreach'** mobilises a network of Community Champions across the 26 counties. These individuals have strong existing links within their local areas, existing experience of engaging with community organisations and volunteers, and are already in contact with the people that the programme ultimately seeks to support.

- Identifying issues arising through Older Persons Council, PPNs, community groups and helpline calls;
- Providing assistance to vulnerable individuals in isolation;
- Ensuring the resilience of existing community services;
- Harnessing offers of assistance from enterprises/businesses generally;
- Collect and map information on services and voluntary groups across the Country to help direct requests for assistance and identify gaps in service.

**3. Community Support Helpline / Call Centre**
- Operating 9.00am to 5.00pm, 7 days per week, with times to be extended, as required
- Contactable by dedicated Council Community Support phone number and email
- Initially based in Council offices, with remote working capacity to be developed
- No. of staff varies per local authority depending on scale
- Cross referenced with the Alone Helpline

**4. Resources**
- Local authority staff with community experience, reinforced by geographically spread redeployed library personnel and central redeployed helpline personnel.
- Costs are estimated to be from €50,000 to €150,000 per local authority, depending on scale, amounting to c€3m in total. These would all be service delivery costs with administration costs absorbed by each local authority.

**5. Types of Services**
    5.1 Collection & Delivery – Food, essential household items, fuel, medications in line with guidance         [GAA / Rural Link, other volunteers from VCs]

| 5.2 Transport to: | Community testing centres | [Local Authority] |
| | Clinical Assessment Hubs | [Local Authority] |
| | GP and hospital appointments | [Local Authority] |
| 5.3 Social Isolation, supports, engagement | | [Alone, others] |
| 5.4 Meals and their delivery | | [Meal-on Wheels / GAA] |
| 5.5  Garda-related | | [Garda Síochána] |
| 5.6 Other calls may reference medical/health needs | | [HSE[3]] |

- Other local organisations (IFA, Irish Rural Link, Muintir na Tire, etc) to assist in 5.1 to 5.4, as required. Local Volunteer Centres can recruit/assign volunteers for tasks and provide guidance and supports.
- Healthcare needs will be provided by the HSE.

**6. How**
- Issues identified and established by contact from individual, HSE, religious, postmen/women (with permission of individual)
- Call or email comes in
- Client details recorded on LAs CRM/IT system, including eircode and category of need
- Email or phone call to community responder
- Email or phone call back from responder to confirm completion and /or ongoing provision of support

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[3] A protocol on referral of any medical/health needs raised will need to be designed with the HSE

- Case closed on LAs CRM/IT system
- Follow up phone call from Call Centre to client within 1 day – regular follow up calls will need to be provided in line with agreed protocols, ALONE may provide a valuable resource in this regard.

## 7. Geographical basis of delivery

7.1 Parish boundaries – contacts established per parish

7.2 Single Garda Síochána email

7.3 Align with the Clinical Hubs established in the Community as far as is possible in discussion with the HSE.

7.4 Geographical Information Supports can be put in place via Ordnance Survey Ireland's GeoHive infrastructure.

## 8. Communication / Publicity

8.1 A comprehensive publicity plan will be rolled out to build awareness of the helplines – via local media, social media and websites, as well as through elected members and the community response groups mentioned above.

8.2 Alone Helpline will link back to each local authority helpline.

8.3 Communications will be in line with the National COVID-19 Communication Plan.

8.4 All communications will be in line with the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET) communications plan. Support can be provided by the NPHET Team with regard to the public health elements of the communications content.

## 9. National Governance

At national level, a governance structure will be established, comprising Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, Department of Rural and Community Development, Department of Health, the County and City Management Association (CCMA) and Department of An Taoiseach.

Role:
- Agree overall process to be implemented in each local authority area
- Put in place protocols, based around public health COVID-19 requirements, for individual engagement
- Engagement with and co-ordination of volunteer organisations nationally
- Monitoring implementation across the sector and troubleshooting issues
- Engagement with businesses and other bodies offering support on a national basis
- The Department of Health will identify any new public health guidance requirements and provide such guidance through the NPHET public health structures.

The safety and well-being of vulnerable or at-risk people during this period is paramount and in order
to protect individuals a dedicated confidential feedback service for people to raise concerns regarding
any service delivered, or the manner in which it is delivered, will be established and coordinated through the local authorities with the appropriate safeguards provided for.