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National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) [Meetings: Agenda and Notes Jan-May 2020]

Item Type	other
Citation	National Public Health Emergency Team, 'National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) [Meetings: Agenda and Notes Jan-May 2020]', [other], Department of Health, 2020
Publisher	Department of Health
Rights	Y
Download date	2026-03-16 09:15:05
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14765/103818



National Public Health Emergency Team – Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)
Meeting Note

Date and Time	27 January 2020 (Meeting 1)
Location	Department of Health, Miesian Plaza, Dublin 2
Chair	Dr Tony Holohan, CMO
Members in Attendance	Dr Colette Bonner, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, DOH Mr Eddie O'Reilly, Communicable Diseases Policy Unit, DOH Ms Joan Regan, Acute Hospitals Policy Division, DOH Ms Deirdre Watters, Communications Unit, DOH Mr David Noonan, GP Services and GMS Contract Unit, DOH Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer (CCO), HSE Dr Kevin Kelleher, Asst. National Director, Public Health, HSE Dr Cillian de Gascun, Laboratory Director, NVRL Dr John Cuddihy, Acting Director, HSE HPSC Ms Denise Long, General Manager, Office of Emergency Planning, HSE
Apologies	N/A
In Attendance	Ms Mary Jane Trimble, Communications Unit, DOH
Secretariat	Mr Daniel Shine, Communicable Diseases Policy Unit, DOH

1. Welcome, Introductions and the Role of NPHET

Following the welcome and introductions, the Chair provided an outline of the role and responsibilities of NPHET within the structures underpinning the Government's response to public health emergencies. He advised that the NPHET is the mechanism for overseeing the health sector response to significant health-based emergencies. It facilitates the sharing of information between the Department and its agencies and provides a forum for agreement as to strategic approaches to such emergencies.

2. Current Assessment / Epidemiology:

The HSE provided an outline as to the nature of coronaviruses and the emergence and epidemiology of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in Wuhan, China. The assessment of the WHO that the current situation with regard to the outbreak does not warrant the declaration of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) was briefly discussed. The numbers of confirmed cases reported by the ECDC in its rapid risk assessment of 26 January were noted:

- 2,026 laboratory-confirmed 2019-nCoV cases have been reported (1,988 in China and 38 imported cases from other countries around the world)
- 56 deaths have been reported among the cases
- Chinese health authorities have confirmed human-to-human transmission outside Hubei province
- 16 healthcare workers are reported to have been infected.

It was noted that the ECDC's risk assessment for the EU / EEA is now 'moderate' but that, subject to appropriate control measures being in place, the risk of onward transmission is rated as 'low'.

HPSC advised that it updates statistical information and recommendations shortly after any updates are made available by the WHO and ECDC.



Action: The NPHET will make their decisions, and any subsequent briefing or statements, based upon the assessments and associated recommendations made by the WHO and ECDC.

3. Preparedness:

HSE National Office for Emergency Management provided an update as regards preparedness measures in place with regard to the outbreak. A sufficient supply of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) is available for the coming weeks and contracts are in place to access further equipment, as required. The HSE's High Consequences Infectious Diseases Group has had several recent meetings and has produced algorithms / procedures for all key sectors. Posters are currently being circulated to relevant sectors.

NVRL requested, and it was agreed, that 'laboratories' be included as a standing item on the agenda for subsequent meetings. NVRL advised that arrangements are in place to forward any possible test samples to Public Health England's Laboratories in Colindale – there is a 48-hour (approx.) turnaround in relation to analysis of samples.

Action: Include Laboratories as an agenda item for future NPHET meetings.

The Chair noted the comprehensive briefing provided by HSE and NVRL in terms of providing assurance that appropriate measures are in place to deal with any issues arising.

4. Communications:

A general discussion took place in relation to communications issues:

- HSE is in regular contact with hospitals, GPs and other stakeholders.
- The information published on the HSE's and HPSC's websites was noted. It was noted that this was the most appropriate source of up-to-date information for the public.
- It was noted that both the Department and HSE are liaising regularly with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) regarding travel advice and related matters.

Action: The NPHET will regularly prepare press statements following their meetings.

5. Any Other Business

Following a request from the HPSC, the Department undertook to contact the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in order to progress the dissemination of information leaflets to colleges and pre-school settings.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, 30 January at 4pm.