



Event Management Guidelines for in-person events

EVENT MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

This protocol is to assist HSE staff involved in organising events such as official openings, launches of reports and policies, presentations, and anniversary celebrations. Events vary widely and the type of event can dictate the media campaign, guest list, venue and type of reception.

In most cases the host service will have responsibility for managing and organising these events supported by the CHO Communications Departments as required. If the host service is unsure about whether Communications support is required this can be discussed with the CHO Communications Manager who will advise.

Public Health Event Requirements

Indoor events need to be carefully planned to ensure that any relevant current public health and Government guidelines are followed. If in doubt, contact your local Public Health department for current advice. Guests should be notified of any COVID-19 restrictions or other relevant information in advance on the invitation. Be mindful of the need for ventilation.

1. Date, Time and Venue

A suitable date, time and venue for the event should be identified as far in advance of the occasion as possible. The proposed details should then be forwarded to the Chief Officer and Head of Service as appropriate to ensure that he/she can be present, or represented, at the event. The Communications Lead should also be notified.

The details can then be confirmed and the date placed in people's diaries. A representative from the host service should be designated to manage the event together with the assistance of the Communications Lead, if necessary.

2. Site Visit

A site visit should be carried out with the host service representative and Communications Lead, if necessary, to walk-through the event prior to any invitations going out. This will help determine capacities and schedule for the event, as well as requirements for any third party equipment e.g. presentation equipment, PA system, stage, podium, backdrop and directional signage. Parking availability, ingress and egress routes, access for people with a disability etc. should be considered.

For larger events, you may find it beneficial to conduct a second recce with third party suppliers on site to ensure they can provide the services required within the space.

3. Event Schedule

An event schedule should be compiled detailing the time and sequence of events as they occur, this can include:

- ◆ **Time of arrival of the dignitary:** it is advisable that the Chief Officer / HSE Senior Manager, together with a designated person from the host service, welcome and accompany them throughout the visit.
- ◆ **Tour of the facility:** the dignitary may wish to tour the facility and any surrounding facilities / services.
- ◆ **Speeches:** the advised sequence of speeches is outlined below.
- ◆ **Media:** photography opportunities and media interviews.
- ◆ **Refreshments/reception:** food supplied should have a range of healthy options such as fruit juice, healthy sandwiches/wraps and fresh fruit. Please note it is not acceptable to serve alcoholic refreshments at HSE events.
- ◆ **Departure:** the guest of honour should be accompanied to their vehicle on departure by the host and other dignitaries.

4. Guests

The proposed guest list, including officiators, guests of honour and dignitaries, should be put together by the host service with assistance from the Communications Lead if required, and sent for consultation to the Chief Officer or Head of Service as appropriate prior to any invitations being distributed. The Chief Officer must be informed in advance if a Government Minister, Minister of State (Junior Minister), or Dáil Deputy is proposed as guest of honour. A wish to invite any Minister must be cleared in advance by the Chief Officer and invitations should be issued from the Office of the Chief Officer. A full SOP on Political Visits is outlined in Appendix 1. The following is a guideline on possible guests.

- ◆ **Invited Dignitary:** The guest of honour who may officially open or launch the event e.g. President, Taoiseach, Tánaiste, Government Minister, Mayor/Cathaoirleach, HSE Official, CEO etc. The dignitary should be invited 6-8 weeks in advance of the event so as maximise the opportunity to place the date in their diary. Once s/he accepts, other guests can then be contacted. Consider designated seating for any guests of honour.
- ◆ **HSE Staff:** HSE Board Chair / Members, Chief Executive Officer or relevant member of the Executive Management Team, Chief Officer, Hospital Group CEO(s), Head of Service / Division, General Manager, HSE Estates representatives (if applicable), and other staff involved in the service / event / launch.
- ◆ **Local Politicians:** Regional Health Forum Chair and/or members, Local or Regional Oireachtas members (T.D.s and Senators), Cathaoirleach/Mayor (County Council Chairperson) and local Councillors.
- ◆ **Project Contributors:** Partners relevant to the project e.g. on-site/local GPs and pharmacists, donators, sponsors, architects, builders, landlords, management companies, local Council department representatives etc.

◆ **Interested Groups:** Other community groups that have a connection to the services e.g. public services (e.g. planning department) / voluntary organisations / advocacy groups, local religious representatives / community groups / business groups / Church leaders.

◆ **Service Users / service user representative:** If applicable, service users should where possible be contacted in advance to notify them of the visit and to seek consent for their involvement.

If the maximum capacity of the venue does not allow for all the above to be invited, the host service should modify the guest list according. Please take into account current health and safety advice available from Public Health.

Government departments should be advised when there are limitations on the number of guests who can attend for health and safety reasons.

5. Invitations

Once the guest list has been finalised, invitations should be sent out from the Chief Officer, or Head of Service (as applicable), ideally two weeks in advance. Sample invitations are included in the Appendices. The following information may also be included:

- Official greeting (e.g. 'Dear.... You are cordially invited to...')
- Title of / reason for event
- Date and time of event
- Location of event (including eircode)
- Parking facilities and/or public transport options
- RSVP address and deadline
- Request for any dietary requirements or allergies, if applicable
- Notice that the event may take place outdoors, if applicable
- Notice that invitations are limited / attendance is by invitation only
- Notice that all relevant public health guidance should be followed
- Notice that photography / filming will be taking place at the event. (Alternatively, this can be done by placing notices on the wall of the location where the event is being held).

6. Media

If required, the Communications Lead will compile a news release in co-operation with the host service. Background information must be provided by the host service. Further information regarding the event may also be included in a digital press pack for the media.

If media are invited to the event they may be required to register prior to attending. The Communications Lead will contact and invite appropriate media to the event and will also handle any media requests (arrange interviews, quotes, press briefings, copies of dignitary's speech etc.) during and after the event.

7. Corporate Style

When organising an event, it is important to be aware that it is ultimately organised by the HSE. Therefore, the event should clearly publicise that it is a HSE event through use of its logo. Please forward a draft of invitations, reports or any printed material to the Communications Lead who will ensure that all documentation meets corporate standards.

8. Photography and Filming

The Communications Lead will arrange a photographer / videographer for the event if required in addition to the press photographers. Very often the official photographer can send the photographs immediately to the print media. The photographer fees will be invoiced to the relevant department and a purchase order is required.

Invited guests should be notified in advance that photography / filming will be taking place if applicable. Place a few notices around the venue advising that filming and photography is taking place. Consent forms should be completed by relevant staff / service users and guests as required. It is the responsibility of the host service to collate and keep a record of these forms with the support of Communications if appropriate.

9. Speeches

The Communications Lead in consultation with the host service will advise on speeches for the Chairperson / Chief Officer / Head of Division / General Manager as required. It is recommended that there should be no more than two-three speeches per event, lasting no more than 3-5 minutes per speech. The host service should forward all relevant information for speeches to the Communications Lead at least two weeks prior to the event. Draft speeches should be circulated by the Communications Lead for final approval one week prior to the event if possible.

The order in which speeches will take place should be detailed in the Event Schedule. This may vary but usually begins with a welcome/introduction by the Senior HSE Manager as agreed in advance. This is followed by the dignitary (for example the Minister or the HSE Chairperson) launching or /opening etc., finishing with the host service putting forward some words of thanks to the dignitary, staff and the guests. The host service manager or senior HSE manager attending would normally act as master of ceremonies for the launch.

10. Briefing Notes

Background briefing information may also be required for the dignitary / Chief Officer / Head of Service/Division regarding the event. The host service should forward this information to the Communications Lead at least two weeks prior to the event. The Communications Lead should circulate briefing notes to all relevant parties one week prior to the event.

11. Other arrangements to be co-ordinated by the host service

There are also some other arrangements, which you should be aware of. These can include the following:

- Seating and seating arrangements for the speakers and guests including name signs for VIPs if required
- Sign in desk at entrance to event should be manned by staff to meet and greet, distribute lanyards/name tags (if required), and sign in sheet should be filled out by each attendee, with names cross checked against the invitation list. This ensures non invited persons do not gain access and can be used to follow up with guests post event. Pop-up banners, plants or flowers to decorate the launch area if appropriate.
- Podium and microphones for the speakers.
- Plaque and wording on plaque, in the event of the opening of a building, please ensure that the plaque meets the Official Languages Act requirements.
- Curtain for unveiling of plaque.
- If the facility has flag poles please ensure the Irish flag / HSE flag / EU flag are flying as appropriate if a dignitary is visiting the facility.
- If you require the use of HSE stands or banners please ensure you check availability with the local Communications Lead. Cutting of a ribbon, in the event of the opening of a building, please ensure you have ribbon and a scissors.
- If the event is on a building site you may need to arrange for hard hats and high visibility jackets. Also if it is raining or forecast for rain please ensure that boards are laid down if the site is muddy and that umbrellas are available to guests.
- If it is a photo opportunity for contracts please ensure that a contract is available for signing.
- Information pack for guests (if appropriate); a souvenir booklet may be produced to mark major developments for example a new hospital or a significant anniversary of existing premises.
- A presentation of flowers/gift to the dignitary (if appropriate) is to be arranged by the host service.
- Refreshments – guests of honour and dignitaries should be accompanied by the manager of the host service to the refreshment area and introduced to staff and other guests. Alcohol should not be served and there should be healthy food choices available. Dietary requirements should be sought in advance.
- Fire and safety procedures should be outlined to the guests at the beginning of the event.
- Cloak-room facilities.
- Car-parking facilities: car-parking should be reserved for Dignitaries and Senior HSE Managers.
- Sign-posting of the event (particularly if on a large complex).
- Security arrangements if relevant, please notify the Gardai if a Minister/President/celebrity etc is attending the event.
- Where disabled persons are likely to be present, access, adequate space for wheelchairs and seating should be arranged. Similar arrangements should be put in place for expectant mothers who might otherwise have to stand during the event.

12 Post event

- Thank you letters/emails should be issued, where appropriate, to attendees.
- Evaluation of event could be conducted, a one pager of learnings to inform the organisation and running of future events.

EVENT MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

Event:

Date:

4-6 weeks in advance

- Identify and circulate date, location and provisional event schedule with key people. Ensure venue is booked.
- Invite dignitary (via Chief Officer's office or designated Senior Manager) and liaise on any special requirements.
- Compile guest list / suggested dignitary and issue to the relevant Chief Officer / Head of Service / Division / General Manager and Communications Lead for consultation.
- Book / order any third party event requirements – engraved plaque / ribbon and scissors, PA system, presentation equipment, podium, staging, backdrops, flowers/gifts, catering, catering supplies, photography etc.

2-4 weeks in advance

- Draft invitation letter / email for issue from the Chief Officer or designated Senior Manager to guests at least two weeks prior to the event.
- Ensure service staff / service users are notified of the event in advance, and that consent forms for photography / video are collated.
- Finalise event schedule / meet-and-greet list and assign responsibilities for the run up to, and day of, the event.

1-2 weeks in advance

- Send background details for event briefing notes, speech material, photography brief, seating orders and press releases to the Communications Lead at least two weeks prior to the event.
- Communications lead to issue invitation to the media if appropriate.
- Check on all final arrangements with Chief Officer/Head of Division/General Manager/Service Manager as appropriate.
- Check on all final arrangements with dignitary's office.

Appendix 1

HSE Political Visits Standard Operating Procedure

The HSE frequently receives requests for political parties to visit services and hospitals. The following guidelines may be useful to managers.

- Party Leaders and Oireachtas members' requests to visit HSE services / hospitals are to be facilitated where possible and arranged through the Chief Officer's office. All political parties must be given the same level of access if requested.
- Any impending visits are to be notified to the CHO Chief Officer, the National Press Office and the relevant CHO
- Dignitaries should be advised that some areas may not be accessible including; high dependency and intensive care units; maternity services; resuscitation areas and areas where patients are very ill or vulnerable.
- Party Leaders are to be greeted on arrival and accompanied by Senior Manager
- During an election period, officially declared candidates from the local constituency may accompany the Party Leader during the visit.
- It should be communicated to the Party that numbers must be kept to a minimum to reduce disruption to patients and to lessen the risk of infection.
- During an outbreak situation, e.g. norovirus, visitors must be made aware of the restrictions. The visit may have to be cancelled or shortened depending on clinical advice.
- Media representatives (print, online or broadcast) cannot be facilitated to accompany the party around the service visit; this is the normal policy and relates to patient confidentiality. However, media interviews can be facilitated by the service, in collaboration with the relevant CHO. Please ensure that there is a suitable room booked for interviews.
- Unscheduled visits are to be brought to the attention of the Service Manager and *politicians are to be advised that the protocol is to arrange a visit in advance through the normal channels.*

Appendix 2

Sample Email Invitations

Dear xxx,

Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City and County (CHO DNCC) wish to invite you to the official opening of The Hamlet respite service in Swords, for children with disabilities living in CHO DNCC on Tuesday, October 19th at 10am by Minister of State with responsibility for Disability, Anne Rabbitte.

The Hamlet is a bespoke respite service commissioned by CHO DNCC and operated by The Talbot Group to deliver short overnight respite breaks to children with disabilities and their families.

RSVP is required; it would be appreciated if you could inform our offices no later than close of business Friday, 8th October 2021 if you would like to attend. (Please feel free to extend the invite to your colleagues and submit a list of names.)

The address and Eircode for The Hamlet are as follows: **The Hamlet, Balheary Demense, Swords, Co Dublin K67WN70**

Yours sincerely,
XX XXXXX

Head of Service for Disability, Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City and County

Dear xxxx,

You are cordially invited to the official opening of the new Rathdrum Primary Care Centre by Stephen Donnelly, T.D., Minister for Health.

This event will commence at **11.30am on Monday 11th October 2021** at Rathdrum Primary Care Centre, Main St, (off Brewery Lane), Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow, A67 KC44.

The entrance to the Centre is located opposite 6 Brewery Lane. Parking is available on site.

Please RSVP to xxxxxx by Friday 8th October 2021.

Please note, due to COVID-19 Health and Safety Restrictions, this event will take place outdoors. Access inside the facility will be limited.



Kind regards,
xxxxxxx

Appendix 3 Sample Media Invitations

Media Invitation

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**Official Opening of Ard Nua, New Mental Health Services Building**

by

**HSE Donegal Mental Health Services**

**The opening will be performed by Minister Kathleen Lynch**

on

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March at 11am**

at

**The campus of Donegal Community Hospital at Rowfield House Donegal Town**

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Please confirm attendance with Communications Officer, HSE North West, on 071 xxx xxxx email: xxxxxx

Dear all

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly TD will be officially opening the Rathdrum Primary Care Centre next Monday 11th October, and we would be delighted if you could attend.

An accompanying Press Release will follow on the day together with photographs from the occasion.

Details are as follows.

Monday 11th October

11.30am – 12.30pm

Rathdrum Primary Care Centre, Main St, (off Brewery Lane), Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow, A67 KC44.

Please confirm your attendance by contacting me on 087 xxx xxxx email: xxxxxx

Please note, photo opportunities at the Centre and speeches will take place outside. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and patient confidentiality, there will be no media access inside the Centre. Photographs will be provided, alongside the Press Release, of the Minister's visit inside the facility.

On the same day prior to this, the Minister will also be visiting St Coleman's Residential Care Centre, no official photocall or speeches will take place here, and there will be no media access inside the facility. Photographs of the Minister's visit inside the Centre and a short press statement will also be provided for this.

Best regards

Xxxxxxx