



These higher cumulative incidence rates as compared to other counties in Ireland were potentially linked to the mass testing that was undertaken in residential care facilities (RCF) when they were experiencing outbreaks. Traditionally, active surveillance (i.e. case finding) as part of the outbreak investigation is associated with greater potential for identification of both symptomatic and asymptomatic cases. This is further shown in **Figure 2** below, where it reveals the increase in numbers of confirmed cases during weeks 17 and 18 of 2020 when mass testing was undertaken (the solid blue bar represents sporadic cases, and the striped bar represents cases linked to outbreaks; majority of cases were linked to outbreaks, where detection of cases is increased due to mass testing, which identified cases that might not have recorded without the outbreak investigation).

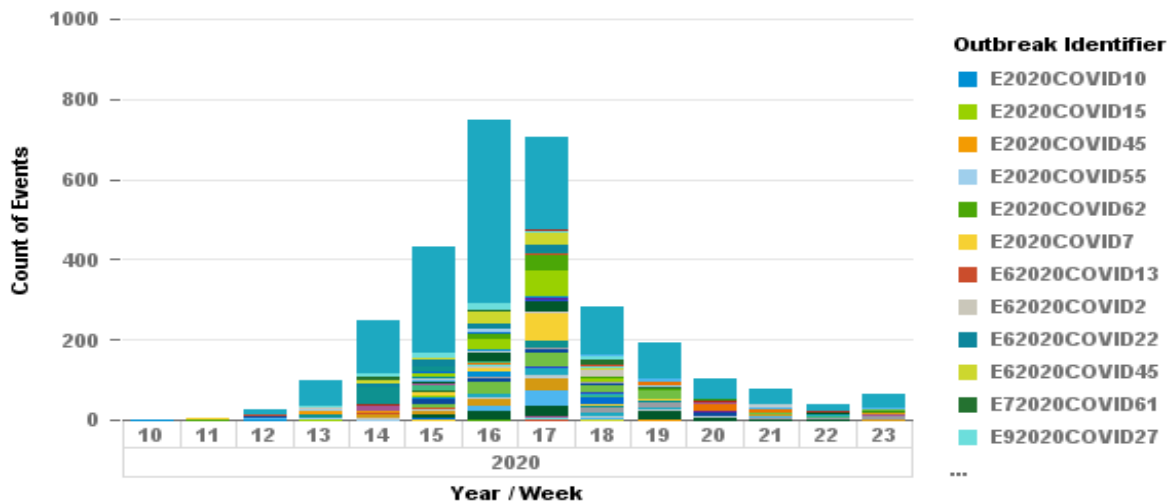


Figure 2: Notification of confirmed cases of COVID19 to Department of Public Health, HSE North-East to midnight 6th June 2020

Furthermore, although the rate of COVID19 cases per 100,000 population for Cavan is the highest in the country, statistical analysis confirmed that it is still within the limits of what is expected for a population of its size in comparison to the rest of the country. Additionally, the rate for Monaghan may be equally explained a random variation (see **Figure 3**). The rate for Dublin is above the upper control limit (UCL) and therefore is an outlier. Statistically speaking, the rate for Dublin is greater than would be expected by chance alone, given the population size for that county.

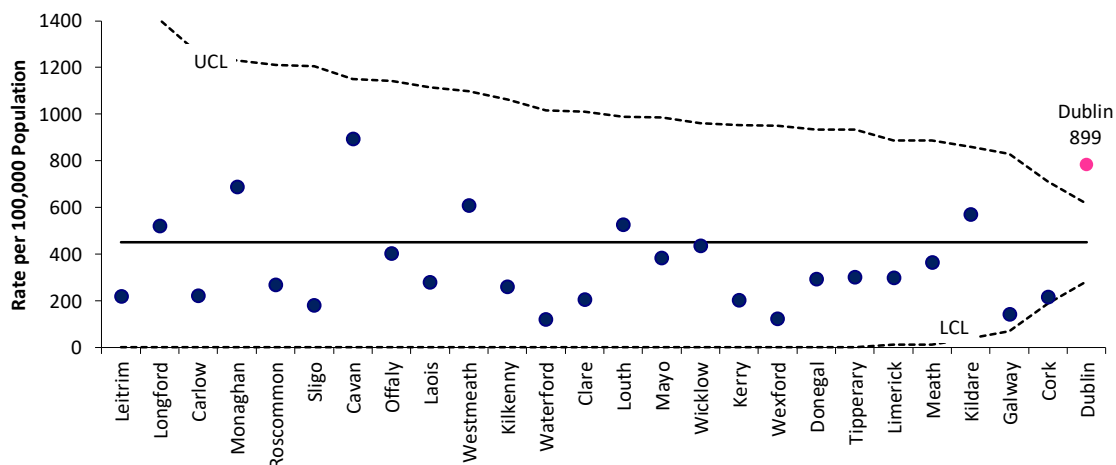


Figure 3: Funnel plot presenting the rate of COVID19 cases per 100,000 population by county

NOTE: the funnel plot is based on data in the public domain.<sup>i</sup> This analysis was undertaken by the Surveillance Team in the Department of Public Health, HSE North-East. It remains consistent with previous analyses undertaken. When interpreting funnel plots, data points that lie above the Upper Control Limit (UCL) or below the Lower Control Limit (LCL)

**are said to be outliers or represent special variation, i.e. the variation observed is more than one would expect to see by chance.**

Based on all the information above, the counties of Cavan and Monaghan do not have a statistically significant higher incidence of COVID19 compared to other counties in Ireland.

The HSE, as a response to managing the pandemic crisis and to organise the setting up of new services, implemented a COVID-19 care pathway across hospital and community. The HSE also set up nine Area Crisis Management Teams (ACMTs), nationwide on the first week of March. The ACMTs, generally chaired by the Chief Officers of the CHOs, consisted of senior managers across Public Health, Acute hospitals, NAS, Environmental Health, key service managers responsible for testing, service delivery etc.

The ACMTs, charged with the full implementation of the plan, engaged fully with private and voluntary nursing homes as requests for support started to arise. These requests ranged from the provision of; Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) advice, general information on managing Covid-19 risks, PPE, staffing support and other necessary requirements such as oxygen provision.

The HSE also established Covid Response Teams in each ACMT as a dedicated resource to support Public Health outbreak teams, and this was for all residential services as well as Home Support settings. The HSE commenced this process on the 27<sup>th</sup> March and this was underpinned subsequently as a necessary action by NPHET on 31<sup>st</sup> March. Importantly these teams, many already in place, were formed so as to deal with the full range of residential care and could, if necessary, be flexibly enhanced with additional skillsets depending on where the outbreaks may occur.

A Temporary Assistance Payment Scheme is in place to support Nursing Homes by a contribution towards additional costs arising from Covid-19. The Health Service Executive is administering the scheme and makes payments to Nursing Homes. There are two separate types of Covid-19 assistance under the Scheme, which consists of a Standard Assistance Payment and an Outbreak Assistance Payment. To qualify for the Outbreak Assistance Payment, the Nursing Home outbreak must be confirmed by HSE Public Health and notified to the Health Protection and Surveillance Centre (HPSC). The Scheme is available to private Nursing Homes within Cavan and Monaghan and there has been a significant level of financial support provided to date to eligible Nursing Homes within both counties.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



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<sup>i</sup> Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) 2020. **COVID-19 Surveillance Reports**. Available URL: [https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/casesinireland/epidemiologyofcovid-19inireland/COVID-19\\_Daily\\_epidemiology\\_report\\_\(NPHET\)\\_04062020\\_v1\\_website.pdf](https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/casesinireland/epidemiologyofcovid-19inireland/COVID-19_Daily_epidemiology_report_(NPHET)_04062020_v1_website.pdf) (Accessed: 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020)