



Oifig an Cheannasaí Oibríochtaí & Feabhsúcháin Seirbhíse  
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**12 February 2021**

**Deputy Gino Kenny, TD  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.**

Dear Deputy Kenny,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following Parliamentary Question, regarding the contingency plans that are in place for adverse scenarios affecting private nursing homes, which was submitted to this Department for response.

**PQ 3792/21: To ask the Minister for Health if a copy of contingency plans he may have for various adverse scenarios affecting private nursing homes will be provided; if a summary will be provided of these plans with particular reference to crises in staffing and in the event of serious Covid-19 outbreaks; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and following subsequent advice from the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET), Covid-19 Response Teams (CRTs) were stood up by the Area Crisis Management Teams (ACMTs) to provide additional supports to long term residential care facilities, including Nursing Homes. The CRTs continue to work with all Nursing Homes (public, private and voluntary). As outlined below, the supports provided by the CRTs is complemented by financial support through the Temporary Assistance Payment Scheme.

The composition of the CRTs include (either as part of its core membership or as 'access to' when required) Public Health, Infection Prevention and Control, Older Persons Service Managers, Consultant Geriatricians, Nursing, and administrative supports. The CRTs can, if necessary, be flexibly enhanced with additional skillsets depending on nature and setting of the outbreak in question.

The CRTs appreciate that every outbreak is unique and, as such, supports provided to each facility vary depending on that facility's current needs. It is however, the responsibility of the private Nursing Homes to respond to the support and advice given by the CRTs, as directed by legislation, national policy and guidance, including:



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- Infection Prevention and Control,
- Outbreak Management,
- Future Admissions,
- Nursing Home Management,
- Staffing,
- Visiting Guidelines and
- Advocacy services.

The wrap-around supports provided by the CRTs were recognised by the Nursing Home Expert Panel as critical interventions, playing a central role in supporting nursing home residents.

With regards to staffing, due to the current, on-going wave of Covid-19 infections, there is a high number of staff currently on Covid-19 related leave across public and private healthcare facilities. In instances where private facilities have notified the HSE regarding low staffing levels, the HSE has worked with nursing home providers to support the procurement of agency healthcare staff. If this was not possible, the HSE has aimed to identify appropriate HSE staff for redeployment to nursing homes. In some instances, where all options were exhausted, the defence forces were engaged to provide support through the carrying out of non-clinical duties.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Tuohy".

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**Sandra Tuohy**  
**Assistant National Director**  
**Services for Older People – Operations**