

## **FURTHER EXTENDED COVID-19 Temporary Assistance Payment Scheme**

### **Scheme Procedures and Details for Payment under Further Extended Scheme**

**Introduction:** The Further Extended Temporary Assistance Payment Scheme (“the Scheme”) was introduced by the State to support Nursing Homes by a contribution towards additional costs arising from Covid-19. The Standard Assistance Payment element of the Scheme was ceased from 30th June 2021. The Outbreak Assistance Payment element of the Scheme will be extended to 31st March 2022.

In supporting contributions towards these costs, the Scheme’s focus transitioned towards supporting Nursing Homes’ implementation of recommendations contained within the Report of the COVID-19 Nursing Homes Expert Panel, as published in August 2020. In order to avail of the Scheme each nursing home in receipt of funding committed to supporting the implementation of the COVID-19 Nursing Homes Expert Panel, as they relate to nursing homes. The HSE remains committed to working with Nursing Homes on implementing these recommendations.

The Health Service Executive (**HSE**) administers the Scheme and makes payments to the Nursing Homes. The Department of Health has requested that the National Treatment Purchase Fund (**NTPF**) administer the application process and provide support and advice to the HSE. These Scheme details are published on a dedicated section of the NTPF and HSE websites.

**1. Interpretation:** In the Scheme details the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

**Additional Allowable Costs** are costs, which are both Additional Costs, and Allowable Costs.

**Additional Costs** are costs incurred by the Nursing Home, which would not have been incurred, were it not for the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

**Allowable Costs** are costs that may be included in an application for support under the Scheme. **Note:** Allowable Costs exclude Excluded Items and non Covid-19 specific costs. Furthermore, Allowable Costs cannot include any costs incurred in respect of which the Nursing Home has been reimbursed, compensated or has received remittance from any other source. Any costs claimed by a Nursing Home in respect of increased work as a result of Covid-19 must be capable of being evidenced and available for review by the HSE and/or the NTPF.

*The Scheme covers additional allowable costs incurred during the period of 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. In addition, any stock purchased but not used during the scheme period is not allowed. All stock movements may be subject to audit or checks of any expenditure.*

**Excluded Items** include the following non-exhaustive list, which may be amended at the absolute discretion of the HSE:

- I. Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”)
- II. HSE support staff and supplies
- III. Legal advice
- IV. Capital Costs
- V. Additional payments to core staff, which

- a. Either in respect of core hours, overtime or premium payments result in rates of pay exceeding rates payable in respect of HSE consolidated salary scales for equivalent or comparable roles;

Or

- b. Where not agreed formally in advance of the working hours to which the payment relates.

For the avoidance of doubt, overtime or premium payments will be excluded where such payments are not payable in respect of equivalent or comparable roles in the HSE

- VI. Vouchers or gift cards provided to employees, agency staff, directors, proprietors or associates of the Nursing Home
- VII. Bonus payments or any increased payments to Nursing Home proprietors or company Directors
- VIII. Bonus payments to all staff
- IX. Any recharges to connected companies
- X. Loss of income
- XI. Interest payments
- XII. Tax
- XIII. Depreciation
- XIV. Amortisation
- XV. Rent
- XVI. Repayments

**Overall Monthly Cap** is the maximum amount that may be paid in respect of each month to a Nursing Home under the Further Extended Scheme. This amount applies to the aggregate of payments under the Standard Assistance Payment and the Outbreak Assistance Payment. From January 1<sup>st</sup> until June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021 the maximum amount that can be paid to a Nursing Home experiencing a verified outbreak was;

Equal to the lowest of:

- three times the Standard Assistance Payment Cap for the month;
- up to the maximum amount of €60,000;

In addition, the amounts claimed hereunder must be less than or equal to the total increase in costs the Nursing Home incurred or will incur in the month as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.

**Standard Assistance Payment Cap** is calculated by reference to the following sliding scale:

- €600 per resident per month for the first 40 residents; and thereafter
- €300 per resident per month for the next 40 residents; and thereafter
- €150 per resident per month for each subsequent resident.

The amount paid in any month further to applications for Standard Assistance Payment may not exceed the Standard Assistance Payment Cap.

The maximum level of financial support under the Further Extended Scheme will be calculated by reference to the average number of residents in the Nursing Home in the month preceding the month to which the claim relates. For example, a June claim will be based on the May average

occupancy, a May claim will be based on the average occupancy for April, etc. Any part of a claim that is in excess of the registered maximum capacity of residents in the applicant Nursing Home shall be ineligible.

For the purposes of calculating the Standard Assistance Payment Cap, the average number of residents in the Nursing Home is calculated as follows:

- I. The Nursing Home identifies all residents who were in active receipt of residential care services in the month
- II. In respect of each of these residents, the applicant calculates the number of days for which the applicant charged fully (and can so demonstrate) for residential care services for that resident for that month
- III. Sum the number of days calculated in paragraph II above for all residents identified in paragraph I
- IV. The average number of residents in the Nursing Home in the month is equal to the sum calculated in paragraph III divided by the number of days in the calendar month.

**On 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 the Standard Assistance Payment element of the Scheme was ceased.**

**Scope:** All applications from Nursing Homes under the Further Extended Scheme. In order to make an application, the applicant must be a Nursing Home as defined under section 2 of the Health (Nursing Homes) Act 1990. Such centres owned and/or operated by the Health Service Executive and such centres which have entered into an arrangement with the HSE under s.38 of the Health Act 2004 are not eligible for this Further Extended Scheme.

**2. The Scheme Details:** There is now one type of Covid-19 assistance with a single application form and separate Claim Form in Excel to make monthly claims, if required. 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).

### **3. Outbreak Assistance Payment**

The Public Health data will also confirm the outbreak sequence. Claims may be made from the Onset First Case Date, once the outbreak has been confirmed by the HPSC daily Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (“CIDR”) file.

The maximum amount that can be paid to a Nursing Home experiencing a verified outbreak is €1,800 per resident, subject to a maximum of €60,000. These amounts apply for Outbreak Assistance Payments from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

The following categories of expenses are deemed to be allowable expenses under the Outbreak Assistance Payment:

- I. Additional payroll costs incurred as a result of a Covid-19 outbreak:
  - a. Extra costs incurred as a result of additional clinical, administrative and support staff costs due to a Covid-19 outbreak (this excludes bonus payments or any increased payments to Nursing Home proprietors or Directors and bonus payments to all staff). For the avoidance of doubt, overtime or premium payments will be excluded where such payments are not payable in respect of equivalent or comparable roles in the HSE.

- II. Reasonable and appropriate extra costs incurred in order to provide accommodation for staff where it is not feasible to avail of HSE provided staff accommodation:
  - a. Evidence will be required to demonstrate why additional staff were required to be eligible for reimbursement under the Further Extended Scheme.
- III. Costs incurred in relation to infection prevention and control:
  - a. Additional education costs in relation to infection prevention and control required as a result of Covid-19 (excluding education provided by the HPSC and HSE, such as that provided through HSElanD and Centres of Nursing Midwifery Education/Centres of Learning).
  - b. Additional laundry costs (excluding capital costs) incurred as a result of a Covid-19 outbreak
  - c. Additional waste disposal costs (excluding capital costs) incurred as a result of a Covid-19 outbreak
  - d. Additional disinfectant products required as a result of a Covid-19 outbreak
- IV. Equipment purchased as a result of a Covid-19, as specified below:
  - a. Blood pressure monitors
  - b. Drip stands
  - c. Commodes
  - d. Costs associated with equipment required to monitor temperatures

*Note that only expenses explicitly listed above will be eligible for reimbursement under the Further Extended Scheme. Items included in the list of Excluded Items specified earlier in Section 1 may not be included in an application for Outbreak Assistance, except where capital costs relate to the purchase of equipment categories explicitly specified above.*

An Outbreak Assistance Payment can be made only after receipt of an Outbreak Assistance Payment Application Form (formerly Form C), which is available on the NTPF and HSE websites.

The applicant cannot include any costs incurred in respect of which the Nursing Home has been reimbursed, compensated or has received remittance from any other source.

Expenses should be consistent with current and any further HSE, NPHE, DoH and HIQA guidance on dealing with Covid-19 outbreaks, including the “Regulatory Assessment Framework of the Preparedness of Designated Centres for Older People for a Covid- 19 Outbreak”, dated 21 April 2020.

*Note that all claims made under the Outbreak Assistance Payment require independently certified verification, except where claims amount to less than €10,000 per month. The independent certified verification of claims shall be provided in the compulsory format, which can be downloaded from the NTPF or HSE websites*

***N.B. Applicants are advised to carefully consider allowable and excluded cost items under the Outbreak Assistance Payment before submitting claims.***

#### **4. Procedure**

4.1 All Nursing Homes who wish to participate in the Further Extended Scheme must sign and complete an application form (and Claim Form(s), if appropriate) for the Further Extended Scheme. The application form can be downloaded from the NTPF and HSE websites and must be signed by an authorised person on behalf of the Nursing Home and sent to the dedicated NTPF e-mail address [covid19support@ntpf.ie](mailto:covid19support@ntpf.ie)

- 4.2 To apply for an Outbreak Assistance Payment, Nursing Homes will submit an Outbreak Assistance Payment Form to the dedicated NTPF e-mail address [covid19support@ntpf.ie](mailto:covid19support@ntpf.ie)

All Nursing Homes who apply for the Outbreak Assistance Payment must provide a detailed description of the COVID measures undertaken associated with the costs claimed. Any application may be subject to a review of the severity of the individual outbreak and extent of response by the particular Nursing Home.

All Nursing Homes must provide independently certified verification of claims made under the Outbreak Assistance Payment in the compulsory format, except where claims amount to less than €10,000 per month.

- 4.3 All **new** applicants must provide their latest NF60 submission and financial information if it is their first time applying for the Outbreak Assistance Payment under the COVID-19 Temporary Assistance Payment Scheme.
- 4.4 The NTPF will verify and validate each claim in accordance with the Scheme Rules and advise on the proposed appropriate amount to be paid to each Nursing Home by the HSE.
- 4.5 The NTPF or the HSE will, on a sample, and/or, risk basis, carry out formal audits of claims made retrospectively and will be supported in this work by professional auditors. It will be necessary for the Nursing Home to be able to provide vouched evidence of Covid-19 expenditure as any expenditure that is not vouched will be deducted from future claims or NHSS payments, or otherwise recoverable as contract debt. All records shall be kept by the Nursing Homes for a minimum period of 6 years.
- 4.6 The HSE will process the Scheme payments in a similar manner but separately to the normal monthly NHSS payment to the Nursing Home's bank account.
- 4.7 The NTPF and the HSE may at any time review and verify any claims made under the Further Extended Scheme. The outcome of any such exercise may result in a change in any advice given by the NTPF hereunder, or a change in payments made or amounts due.

## **5. Process**

- 5.1 The NTPF will confirm receipt of the signed Outbreak Assistance Payment Form.
- 5.2 Each Nursing Home will provide information on relevant charged bed day activity by unit to the NTPF so that relevant payment caps can be calculated. The process to calculate payment caps is outlined within Section 1, above.
- 5.3 The NTPF will verify that the Outbreak Assistance Payment Form submitted have been completed correctly.
- 5.4 The NTPF will calculate the Overall Monthly Cap for the relevant month.

- 5.5 The NTPF will assess the payment amount for the relevant month in accordance with the Further Extended Scheme Rules.
- 5.6 The NTPF will advise the HSE of the proposed payment amount for each Nursing Home as assessed above, as per an agreed Memorandum of Understanding put in place between the NTPF and the HSE.
- 5.7 The HSE will validate and process the payments in accordance with the HSE’s own payment control procedures.
- 5.8 Final payment approval sign-off will be provided at relevant senior management level within the HSE.
- 5.9 The above process will be repeated for the following month.
- 5.10 Final payments for the Further Extended Scheme will be made in respect of the period to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

**Glossary of Relevant Organisations**

NPHET	National Public Health Emergency Team
HSE	Health Service Executive
DOH	Department of Health
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
NTPF	National Treatment Purchase Fund
HIQA	Health Information and Quality Authority
HPSC	Health Protection and Surveillance Centre