



Comharchumann Forbartha & Fostaíochta Árann Mhór

PCT - CH01 Emergency care sub-group - strategy for islands.

Today's meeting (16 March 2020) was very informative and very useful to the island representatives present. Under discussion, was all aspects of the COVID-19 viral threat, from testing to treatment.

- The NAS are currently carrying out home testing on the mainland, currently patients can wait up to twenty-four hours for a test. From tomorrow, local GP's will have access to the test kits. An isolated room will be set up on Arranmore by the Medical Team to carrying out testing, or otherwise as the GP's see fit. The time taken from testing to being informed of the result is from 26-36 hours.
- NOWDOC will **not** be testing for COVID-19, instead a patient will be referred to their GP or in severe cases to a testing centre. Testing centres are in the process of being set up countrywide.
- The Island Ambulance will continue to provide Casualty Care cover to all.
- The RNLI will not be tasked to evacuate patients with suspected COVID-19 in any case.
- Irish Coast Guard Rescue Helicopters will continue to provide a medical evacuation service to the islands, on a case by case assessment.
- Training will begin this week to train additional local medical personnel to take the tests. This will enable a faster turnaround of test results.
- The issue of Island medical staff, and self-isolation is currently being looked at by the HSE.
- Supports to vulnerable people in the community are currently being looked at by community groups.
- Visitor services are currently affected in Hospitals and Care Homes countrywide. This will continue indefinitely.
- Public Health Advice in relation to COVID-19 will be made available to the general public, in paper form, before the end of the week.
- There are no plans for isolation units at this time. Self-isolation should take place in your own home.
- All groups should have appropriate personal protective equipment supplied before the end of the week. The protection of frontline staff will continue to be of critical importance going forward.
- It was noted that false or misleading information being circulated on social media platforms are putting lives in danger and giving mixed messages as to Public Health Advise. Please only take direction from official and responsible sources such as those below.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/472f64-covid-19-coronavirus-guidance-and-advice/>

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/>

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/>

<https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>