

Question submitted to RapidInfo4U

Is there a mandatory requirement to set aside vacant rooms to be utilised in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak in a residential centre?

Will there be financial provision or grant to the centre to cover the cost of having vacant rooms for this purpose?

Answer

On 19 August 2020, the COVID-19 Nursing Homes Expert Panel Report was published. The report contains a range of recommendations in line with lessons learned to date and international best practice, aimed to safeguard the residents in nursing homes over the next 12-18 months and into the longer term (access the report [here](#)). The report states (p.103):

Facilities must have ability and space to isolate and cohort residents and a clear plan on how this will happen. This plan should be incorporated into preparedness plans.

The above mentioned report informed the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) *COVID-19 Interim Public Health, Infection Prevention & Control Guidelines on the Prevention and Management of COVID-19 Cases and Outbreaks in Residential Care Facilities* (V6.1; access this document [here](#)). Published on the 3rd November 2020 the HPSC guidelines state (p.15):

Each RCF should have an area identified where a resident with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 could be isolated

On the 5th November, 2020, the Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health and Older People announced €42 million in funding for private and voluntary nursing homes. Full details of this funding is available [here](#). The funding includes provision for the extension of the Temporary Assistance Payment Scheme (TAPS) to June 2021. There are two components to the scheme:

1. a monthly support payment based on additional cost experienced by nursing homes because of COVID-19
2. enhanced assistance in the event of a nursing home actively managing an outbreak

TAPS has now been updated to allow nursing homes to apply for funding to implement the recommendations of the COVID-19 Nursing Homes Expert Panel.

Conclusion

All Residential care facilities should have an area identified where a resident with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 could be isolated in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak. The Temporary Assistance Payment Scheme for private and voluntary nursing homes has been updated to allow for funding support to implement the recommendations of the COVID-19 Nursing Homes Expert Panel and HPSC.

Disclaimer

This document has not been peer-reviewed; it should not replace individual clinical judgement. The views expressed in this document are not a substitute for professional medical advice. The content of this document is correct as of 26/01/2021

Rapid Evidence Search & Summary (RESS)

Our team of multidisciplinary researchers and clinicians in conjunction with the University of Limerick Library and Information Services have developed a detailed protocol for conducting a Rapid Evidence Search & Summary (RESS) to answer questions submitted to RapidInfo4U. Our RESS protocol uses PICO or PEO methods to refine your question and follows a detailed search procedure capturing guidance documents from governments, institutions and professional bodies; searching clinical and COVID specific repositories; and identifying the most recent reviews and RCTs in the scientific literature using established databases.