



Oifig an Phríomhfheidhmeannach Oibríochtaí Oifigeach  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Ospidéal Dr. Steevens'  
Baile Átha Cliath 8

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**CEO Ref: 01549**

17<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Ms Áine Mc Guirk  
Chair  
Irish Association of Social Workers  
114-116 Pearse Street  
Dublin 2

**Re: Home Visits by IASW during COVID-19 Pandemic**

Dear Ms Mc Guirk

I wish to acknowledge receipt to your letter of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 to Paul Reid, CEO regarding concerns raised by your members about carrying out home-visits during the COVID-19 pandemic and the availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the workplace. Your correspondence has been referred to me to respond to. I would like to apologise for the delay in responding to your email and any inconvenience caused.

The most important protective measure for all Health Care Workers is adherence to the same Infection Prevention Control advice provided to the rest of the population. This includes physical distancing both inside and outside of work and hand washing.

However, specific guidelines have been developed and are being implemented across Community Healthcare Organisations to support staff in the provision of home visits. Good infection prevention and control practices including the appropriate use of PPE is vital to ensuring the safety of patients and staff during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The HSE have also issued guidance on PPE requirements pertaining to different roles and responsibilities within the wider health service to assist staff in delivering services. As you are aware the HSE is working hard to secure continuity of supply in a competitive global environment. It is important that available PPE is allocated to provide the best protection for those colleagues at most risk.

The Chief Clinical Officer and I have issued regular updates and guidance to Chief Officers and Area Crisis Management Teams on PPE, guidance which is communicated throughout the health service, including the wide range of services within which Social Workers operate. Guidance for healthcare workers is available on the HSE website and is regularly updated (<https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/news/coronavirus-news/>).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne O'Connor'.

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Anne O'Connor  
Chief Operations Officer