



Mental Health Commission

Update on Covid-19 Risk Framework

The Department of Health has requested that the Mental Health Commission undertake a risk rating exercise as part of enhanced public health measures for COVID-19 disease management for the purposes of liaising with national and regional governance structures to support services.

The Commission developed a risk framework to contact and assess services in terms of their preparedness, environment and disease progression. On the week commencing 6 April, the Commission's Regulatory Team began contacting mental health residential facilities (approved centres and 24-hour nurse staffed community residences) to assess them against the risk framework.

The risk framework includes 51 questions that can be answered with a 'yes' or 'no'. For example, 'Do all residents have a single room with an en-suite?' The answers to the questions were then used to calculate an overall risk score. The purpose of this risk score was to have a transparent and objective method to identify services which may require more support and resources.

Through this process, the Commission has been able to escalate concerns to the HSE and Department of Health, for example, in relation to PPE, delays in testing and inconsistencies in the interpretation and application of public health advice. The Commission has received assurances from the HSE that such concerns are being addressed.

Following this initial contact, on the week commencing Tuesday 13 April, the Commission's Regulatory Team completed follow up calls with each service. This was a shorter phone call confirming the number of suspected and confirmed cases and identifying any issues or concerns within the service.

Updated assessment and risk score

During our monitoring calls, we have been informed of a number of action and contingency plans put in place to address areas of risk in the risk framework, for example moving residents out of shared accommodation. In order to accurately assess the level of risk within services and to reflect these actions taken, the Commission's Regulatory Team will be conducting a follow up assessment with services. This will give services an opportunity to provide information on actions taken since the first assessment to address risk areas.

This follow up assessment will take place with the agreed nominated contacts for each service and will commence on Tuesday 5 May.

We would like to emphasize that this process is not an inspection, compliance or enforcement process. The purpose of the risk assessment is to identify services or areas where resources and support may be needed. The Commission is committed to working with and supporting services as part of this risk assessment process.

We understand that services are experiencing unprecedented challenges and demands and we very much appreciate the cooperation of staff and service providers at this time.