

# Mental Health Commission

## Re-starting Inspections of Approved Centres during the COVID-19 Pandemic



Thursday, 25 June 2020

On 13 March, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mental Health Commission announced that it had suspended the inspection of approved centres. The Inspector of Mental Health Services is required each year, under the Mental Health Act 2001 (the 2001 Act), to visit and inspect all approved centres on the Register of Approved Centres. The Inspector is required to assess compliance with 2016 (Approved Centre) Regulations, Rules, and Codes of Practice. In line with this requirement and following consultation with Public Health, the Inspector of Mental Health Services, Dr. Susan Finnerty, plans to recommence inspections on 13 July, 2020. It is noted that recommencement of inspections is subject to disease progression and directives issued by the Government and Public Health and appropriate risk assessment.

### Inspection Process

The Mental Health Commission has reviewed and streamlined its inspection process for the remainder of the 2020 cycle. This will allow for the completion of all annual inspections whilst minimising time spent on site by inspectors. All annual inspection dates will be announced, with all centres receiving two weeks' notice of their inspection date. While changes during the course of the cycle are likely, the Mental Health Commission will endeavour to communicate any changes with as much notice as possible.

Inspections will consist of smaller inspection teams and less time spent on site. While on site, all public health guidelines will be followed to protect the health and welfare of approved centre residents and staff, as well as our inspection teams and other commission staff. Where possible, all interviews will be completed over the phone or by video call. The lead inspector will contact each approved centre in advance to plan this and, where this is not possible, alternative arrangements will be made.

To support this leaner inspection process there will be two key changes:

- i. The inspection will focus on compliance with 2016 Regulations, Rules and Codes of Practice. No quality assessment of the regulations will be carried out.
- ii. The Inspector has identified portions of the inspection that can be completed in advance by review of documentation submitted by the approved centre. (*Approved Centre Document Checklist – June 2020* attached).

## Required Actions

In order for the commission to conduct inspections in this manner there are a number of actions required by all approved centres:

- i. Each approved centre is required to nominate a point of contact for their annual inspection. While not an exhaustive list, duties will include:
  - a. Liaising with the lead inspector and compliance lead in advance of the inspection;
  - b. Informing the lead inspector of suspected or confirmed cases of Covid-19;
  - c. Ensuring the uploading of documents to CIS as per point (ii);
  - d. Ensuring the readiness of documents for inspectors on inspection as per point (iii), and;
  - e. Act as a point of contact for inspectors while on inspection.

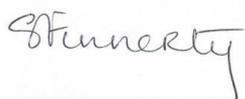
Given the nature of the role, the nominated person should have a strong working knowledge of the approved centre. The name and contact details of this person should be submitted to [compliance@mhcirl.ie](mailto:compliance@mhcirl.ie) by **3 July 2020**

- ii. Each centre is required to submit a complete set of documents provided in section one of the *Approved Centre Document Checklist – June 2020* (attached to this email). These documents must be uploaded to our Comprehensive Information System (CIS) and cannot be submitted by email. The document *How to Upload Documents to CIS* is also attached to this email. All documents must be uploaded by close of business **10 July 2020**. If you require additional support to complete this, please contact the inspections administrative team at [inspectorateadmin@mhcirl.ie](mailto:inspectorateadmin@mhcirl.ie). We will prioritise support for centres that are due inspection in the coming weeks.
- iii. Centres will be required to have a list of documents ready for when the inspectors arrive at the centre. These can be found in section two of the *Approved Centre Document Checklist – June 2020*.

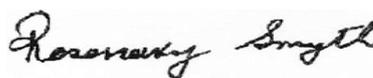
As always, we encourage you to stay in touch with us. Please contact us if there are specific concerns and issues that you would like to make us aware of.

We wish you and all approved centre residents, patients, and staff well during these challenging times.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Susan Finnerty MCN 009711  
Inspector Mental Health Services



Ms Rosemary Smyth  
Director of Standards and Quality Assurance