

25 March 2020

Dear Provider / Manager,

I am writing to you today to provide you with several important updates. Firstly however, I would like to acknowledge the impact that the Covid-19 situation is having on your ability to sustain service provision. There is a lot of uncertainty around and your commitment to providing good quality care to those who need it most will undoubtedly be tested as this situation evolves.

You may be aware that certain amendments have been made to the Regulations following their approval by the States Assembly on Tuesday afternoon. These amendments have been brought forward to support care providers to continue to provide a service as safely as possible.

As a result of the Covid-19 situation, there may be circumstances in which you will need to tell the Commission that you cannot comply with conditions on registration (Regulation 3). The 'suspension' of these conditions can be for a period of three months and only if the Covid-19 situation makes it impossible for you to meet the conditions. We have developed a notification form for this purpose and will be making this available to you on our website.

I am aware that some of you are already planning for staffing shortages. The provision of adequate numbers of safely recruited, experienced and competent staff will continue to be a regulatory expectation (Regulation 17). However, it is accepted that the plans that have been put in place by providers to mitigate against noncompliance with this regulation may not be successful. The amendment means that where there is a shortage of staff arising from the Covid-19 situation, you must declare this to the Commission and advise which relevant part (s) of the regulation cannot be met.

You will be aware that it is a requirement for the Commission to undertake an inspection of each regulated activity once every 12 months. An amendment to the regulations (Regulation 32) has also come into force which means that this requirement does not apply if inspections cannot be undertaken due to the Covid-19 outbreak (please see [here](#) for more details)

I would like to assure you that while the Commission is not currently able to visit your services to undertake inspections, there are other regulatory aspects to our role that will remain intact. These include responding to notifications, variation applications and other information that you submit. It also includes providing you with access to our duty system which currently operates Monday to Friday between the hours of 9 – 5pm. The operational hours of our duty system are under review and we may extend this provision across all seven days of the week. I will write to you again if this changes. Our Hill Street office remains open and is staffed daily (Mon – Fri) by administrative staff and Regulation Officers.

Many of you will already have received contact from the Regulation Officer allocated to your service. Please continue to contact the Regulation Officer allocated to your service if you wish to discuss any of this new information.

We will continue to offer as much guidance, support and advice as our remit allows. Where appropriate, staff will signpost providers to other agencies or organisations that may be able to provide support.

Our website is under development and will soon have a Covid-19 page where you will be able to locate guidance, notification forms and references to the changes in legislation referenced above.

Kind regards,

Audrey Murphy

Chief Inspector