



**Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta, Acmhainní Daonna**  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí Sláinte  
Ospidéal Dr. Steevens'  
Baile Átha Cliath 8

**Office of the National Director of Human Resources**  
Health Service Executive  
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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Chief Executive Officer  
Each National Director  
Each Assistant National Director HR  
Each Hospital Group CEO  
Each Hospital Group Director of HR  
Each Chief Officer CHOs  
Each Head of HR CHOs  
Each CEO Section 38 Agencies  
Each HR Manager Section 38 Agencies  
Each Employee Relations Manager  
Each Group Director of Nursing & Midwifery  
Each Group Director of Midwifery  
Each Clinical Director  
Director National Ambulance Service

**From:** Ms Anne Marie Hoey, National HR

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Subject:** HSE Exploring Staff Experiences of COVID-19 – Focus Groups

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Dear Colleagues

I am pleased to forward you the report of the recent Staff Focus Groups, which were undertaken over a two week period in September 2020.

In order to learn from staff experiences of COVID-19, the HSE, in partnership with Core Research began a Two Stage Research Project in July 2020. The first stage involved an online Pulse Survey which focused on staff experience during the period from March to June and aimed to assess the practises and processes that the HSE should retain as a result of COVID-19, and how services and the ways of working should evolve over the months ahead (*please refer to Pulse Survey Report – 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020*).

The second stage of the research took place from 15<sup>th</sup> September to 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 in the form of 9 virtual Focus Groups representative of the 6 staff categories across geography and healthcare settings. The purpose of the Focus Groups was to delve deeper into the information already captured in the Pulse Survey and to explore what might have changed from the period of June to September.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff who took the time out of their busy schedules to participate in both the Pulse Survey and Focus Groups in order to share their experiences. The findings of this research offer an important opportunity for us to learn from staff feedback and inform recovery and action planning into the future.

**The main themes are as follows:**

1. **Staff Recognition:** Show genuine appreciation & support ALL staff (emotionally, physically and technically) to do their job to best of their ability.
2. **Health & Wellbeing:** Focus on safety, enhance social connections and better promote the supports that are available.
3. **Workplace Culture:** Foster and promote collaboration, communication and connect the goals and actions of staff with the wider purpose of the HSE
4. **Communication & Information Sharing:** Engage staff in a continual two-way dialogue, be empathetic and fully transparent.
5. **Involvement in Decision Making:** Provide the opportunity for staff voices to be heard and acknowledged, while streamlining decision making.
6. **ICT supports:** Upgrading and standardising IT capabilities ensuring efficient remote working and digital service provision.

Attached, for your information is the complete survey report. I would be obliged if you could circulate this widely to your managers and staff, review the findings in the context of your local experience and develop an action plan.

Please pay particular attention to the areas highlighted above which include,

1. Ways in which we can continue to recognise the contribution of staff
2. Opportunities for further involvement of staff using their expertise and insights into on-going planning and decision making,
3. Maximising supports available to staff around their health and wellbeing and
4. Ensuring clarity of direction for staff in times of crisis and on-going change.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to all staff for their on-going commitment, professionalism and resilience as we continue to work together to manage this pandemic.

Yours sincerely



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**Anne Marie Hoey**  
**National Director of Human Resources**



“To view the Health Services People Strategy 2019 - 2024 please click [here](#).”