



27th March 2020

Ms Aine McGuirk
Chair of the IASW.
The National Social Work Organisation of Ireland CLG
T/A Irish Association of Social Workers
St. Andrews Resource Centre
114-116 Pearse Street
Dublin 2

RE: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Dear Aine,

Thanks for your letter of the Tuesday 24th March raising the issue of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for social workers.

I want firstly to thank all social workers who are continuing to provide vital services to the public in the face of significant threats to their own health and welfare with Covid 19. Tusla has worked hard over the past years to protect workers, developing caseload weighting measures and put a series of supports in place for workers including access to counselling and support services. In this current crisis we are working to protect the social workers in prioritising essential work and working from home to increase social distancing. Tusla appreciates all those workers who are continuing to work to protect children, support families and provide safety where necessary at this difficult time.

Tusla has issued a series of guidance on key issues addressing risks in regard to the daily tasks that Tusla workers are undertaking including home visiting, courts, access, child protection conferences, data protection when working from home and others. We are very concerned also for the health of all workers who are engaging with children and families directly. We are working on a range of further measures to ensure that the welfare of staff is protected at this time and our Health and Safety Office are issuing more specific guidance on this in the next days.

A consignment of aprons, gloves, hand gel and face masks have been distributed to the offices of the Service Directors for national distribution including residential services and the out of hours. Access to this material is through social workers' line management. At this time, PPE is in very short supply in the country even in some of our acute health care facilities and we will be guided by the national response to this emergency in an effort to protect the country from the current threat.

Every effort is being made to address the risk to front line social workers and we will continue to communicate with social workers as this situation develops.

Yours Sincerely,

GERARD BROPHY
CHIEF SOCIAL WORKER

CORU Registration Number SW004689