

directly overseen by the Department. This is a recognition of the expertise of staff within the Agency.

- 9.4 The PHA board and its management team are well aware of the difficulties and tensions which arose specifically around the reporting of daily death figures. It seems clear from a recent feedback session, from this rapid review to the PHA board, that there are individuals who attend PHA Board meetings who still cannot grasp why it was so important to the Minister and the Department to have exact and reliable figures about the number of daily deaths. This was and is, a matter of public confidence and a measure of the competence of the system to respond to the pandemic.
- 9.5 Discussion with Departmental officials indicates that there is a concern about the ability of the Agency to understand the Department's requirement for information including the required frequency of reporting during the pandemic. The Department's current area of focus is largely on the contact tracing system, the need for regular reporting on contact tracing activity and specifically:
- a) the need for PHA staff to provide expert analysis, assessments and advice based on whatever data is included in these reports. The DoH has already been very specific in outlining what its requirement is from the PHA in terms of the content and frequency of reports on contact tracing etc.; and
  - b) the need to ensure that effective arrangements are in place to deal with outbreaks and clusters.
- 9.6 The Department has asked that the frequency of the monthly Covid report be changed to become a weekly report. They also want the Agency to provide expert analysis, assessments and advice about what has happened and is happening in Hospitals and Nursing homes in order to inform decisions about the current and future response to the pandemic. It is entirely appropriate that