



Health Minister welcomes commitment on care home statistics

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Health Minister Robin Swann has welcomed the commitment by NISRA to publish statistics on deaths and suspected deaths in care homes related to Covid-19.

The Minister said: **“Currently, the reporting of Covid-19 deaths falls into two main categories. The Public Health Agency publishes a daily surveillance report, which includes information on deaths reported by Trusts and focusses mainly on hospital-based deaths.**



“This is important information which enables comparison with other regions who follow the same pandemic reporting protocols. Clearly, for such comparisons to be meaningful and valid the data must be produced on a similar basis.

“In addition, NISRA is publishing weekly deaths statistics that include suspected and confirmed COVID-19 related deaths across hospital and community settings.

“I welcome NISRA’s intention to provide a further level of breakdown including, as soon as possible, information on deaths in care homes.

“It’s in everyone’s interests for published statistics to give as full a picture as possible on Covid-19. We need maximum public awareness on the seriousness of the virus and its potentially devastating consequences.”

The Minister also stated: **“I also want to make clear that testing of any care home resident or staff member displaying Covid-19 symptoms is being undertaken. This is an important measure to help residents stay safe.**

“Vital work is being done by the HSC system to support care homes and their residents at this time.

“Every single one of these residents matter just as much as every other citizen in our society. Evidence from all parts of these islands and elsewhere around Europe shows that care homes are particularly vulnerable to Covid-19. We must continue to do all that we can to protect residents and staff and to show that the care home sector is as valued and as important as any other part of the health and social care system.

“The RQIA has set up a Service Support Team to provide help, advice and support to care homes and domiciliary care providers. Trusts also continue to work closely with homes to ensure the provision of PPE and to help address staffing challenges. In the event of an outbreak, expert PHA advice on infection control is available.”

In the past week 1.7 million items of PPE have been distributed by Trusts to the Independent sector which includes care homes and domiciliary care settings. This includes 637,000 gloves, 413,000 plastic aprons and 400,000 liquid repellent surgical masks.

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