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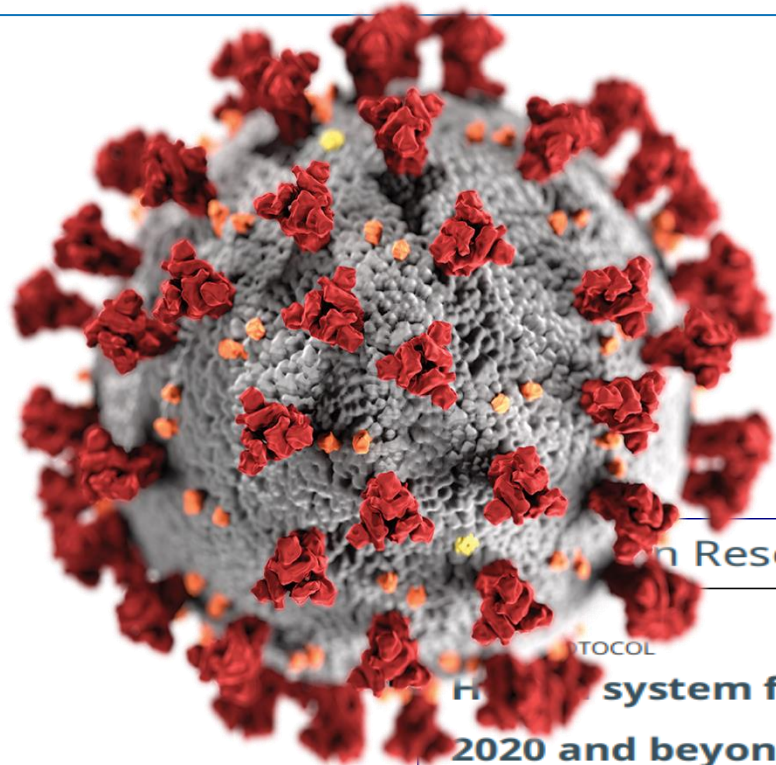
Building health system resilience through policy development in response to COVID-19 in Ireland: from shock to reform

Sara Burke, Sarah Parker, Padraic Fleming, Sarah Barry, Steve Thomas
Rikke Siersbaek

RESTORE workshop

16 November 2021

A collaboration of the Foundations and RESTORE projects in Centre for Health Policy and Management



RESTORE – Resilience to Reform





TOWARDS DYNAMIC RESILIENCE IN HEALTH SYSTEM PERFORMANCE AND REFORM

Open Research

HRB Open Research 2020, 3:70 Last updated: 28 SEP 2021



Health system foundations for Sláintecare implementation in 2020 and beyond – co-producing a Sláintecare Living Implementation Framework with Evaluation: Learning from the Irish health system’s response to COVID-19. A mixed-methods study protocol [version 1; peer review: 2 approved]

Sara Burke ¹, Steve Thomas ¹, Malgorzata Stach¹, Paul Kavanagh ², Laura Magahy³, Bridget M. Johnston¹, Sarah Barry ¹

Evidence to inform health system change in the public interest

Work has begun on a new Health Research Board funded project that will help guide the design and roll-out of the new Regional Integrated Care Areas (RICAs) announced by Minister Simon Harris in July 2019.

This is one of six new awards that the HRB is funding under its Applied Partnership Award Programme.

According to Dr



Building health system resilience through policy development in response to COVID-19 in Ireland: from shock to reform

If and how government's pandemic response contributed to health system reform and + resilience

AIM

- To use Ireland as a case to assess health system resilience during COVID-19
- To assess if Ireland is using COVID-19 health system response to manage the crisis whilst also reforming or locking in better health system design

CONTEXT:



- Very different response to 2008 (invest V slash)
- Arrived in third (?) year of Sláintecare's implementation

METHODS:

- Key government, policy & budget docs 03/20-05/21
- Health system, health reform, COVID-19 (13 identified)
- Docs analysed for content relevant to health system resilience & reform as well as budget allocations

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Series Health Policy

Building health system resilience through policy development in response to COVID-19 in Ireland: From shock to reform

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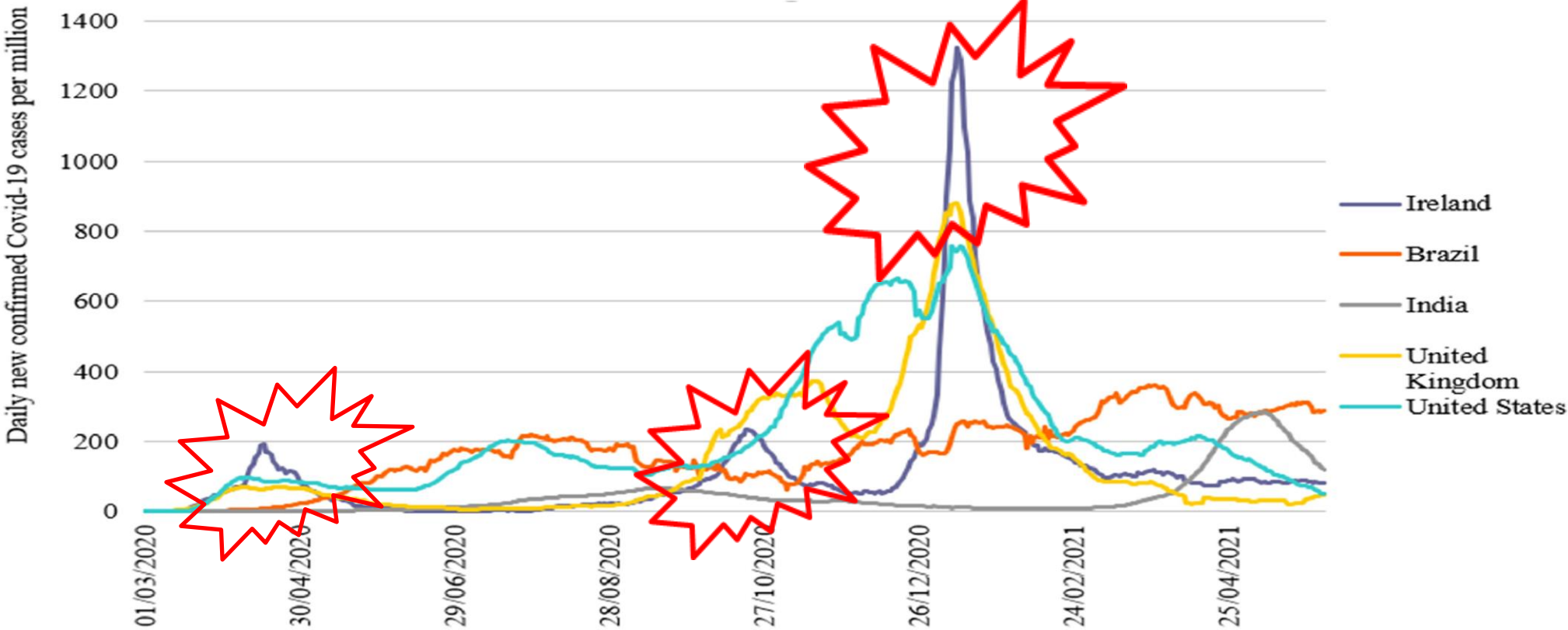
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Resilience
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ABSTRACT

Health systems worldwide are experiencing profound shocks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, with increased attention to health system resilience and researching ways to endure shocks. Pre-COVID-19, Ireland had begun a ten-year programme of reform, Sláintecare, aiming to deliver universal, timely access to integrated care. This study examines whether and how the Irish government's pandemic response contributed to health system reform and increased resilience including delivering universal healthcare. Documentary analysis identified and critiqued relevant government, health system and budgetary documents, published March 2020 - May 2021. Thirteen national policy documents were found, showing increased policy rhetoric and intent to implement reform, demonstrated by increased policy alignment with and budgetary allocation to Sláintecare, alongside implementation of key innovations. Ireland's health system response to COVID-19 offers a unique opportunity to advance understanding of government efforts to reform amidst a global pandemic. It indicated policy intent and funding to manage the Irish COVID-19 crisis, but to also build health system resilience through implementing Sláintecare. This case study has international significance, enabling policy development with potential for long-term health system transformation.

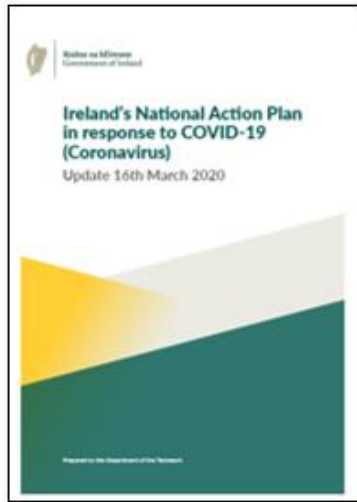
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Findings presented across three waves



Responding to wave 1: March 2020 to June 2020

Delivering long promised reform



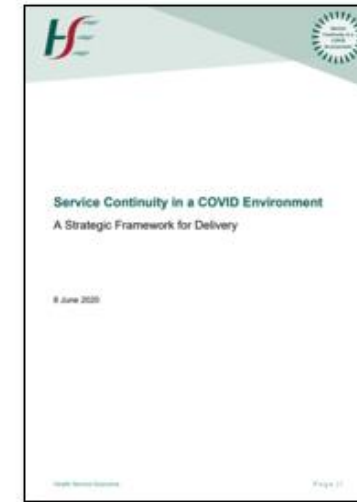
March 2020



1 May 2020



16 June 2020



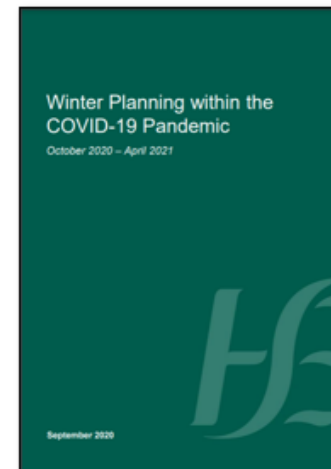
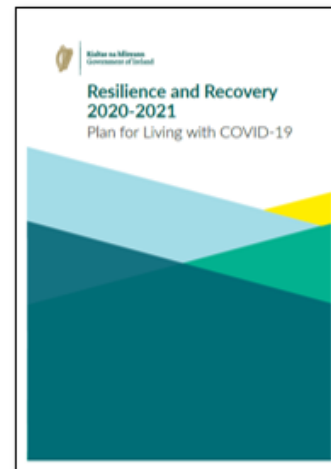
June 2020

Public health as lynchpin

Universal nature of COVID response

Wave 1 legacy & wave 2: July to October 2020, October to December 2020

Greater alignment with Sláintecare



July 2020

September 2020

October 2020

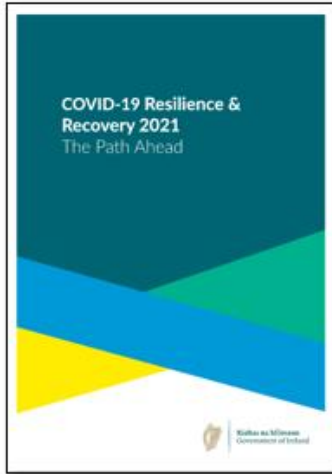
October 2020

Significant extra money for health

Community first approach

Wave 3: January 2021 – May 2021

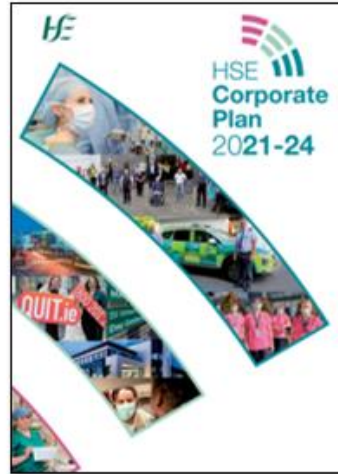
Delivering Sláintecare reform



March 2021



March 2021



May 2021



May 2021



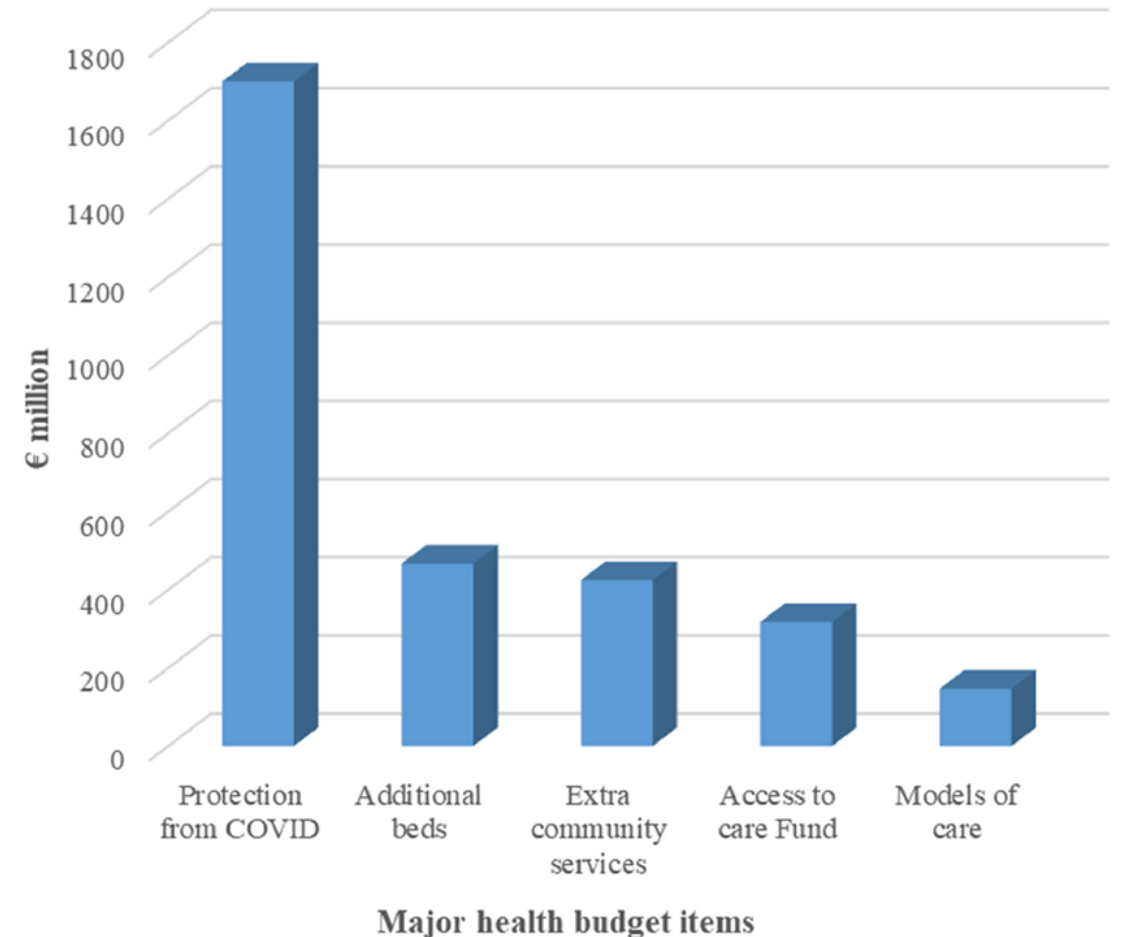
May 2021

Continue to build health system resilience

Health inequalities, moving towards universal healthcare

What does this analysis tell us?

- COVID-19 stalled progress on reform /Sláintecare in early 2020
- Sláintecare prioritised since mid-2020
- Biggest ever allocation to Sláintecare
- Strongest ever alignment between political commitments (PfG), government COVID-19 & health system policy responses and Sláintecare



Transformatory resilience?

Evident in

Universal nature of COVID-19 health system responses

Huge resources put to build up system capacity and performance (staff, beds)

Much more emphasis on enhanced community care, community first, public health contracts

Agile, innovative responses evident in access to tele & ehealth (universal GP tele care) & IHI

New care pathways

Strong emphasis on public health, solidarity, engagement of other sectors...



From shock to reform (to shock again?)

Sláintecare resignations threaten Sláintecare's viability

Our analysis looks at policy intent and budget allocation, indicators of change rather than actual change yet also evidence of actual change

Will the intent & 'reform' translate into long term change?

Will new Sláintecare leadership drive & sustain the whole system reform as envisaged even in May 2021?

Research on activity and workforce indicate not yet, need to drill into specific areas & across countries

Yet the possibility remains that Ireland uses the pandemic for transformatory resilience

The screenshot shows a news article from RTE. The main headline is "Sláintecare plan requirements seriously lacking - Keane". Below the headline, it says "Updated / Wednesday, 15 Sep 2021 09:00". There are social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Email. The article features a large photo of Professor Tom Keane, with a caption that reads "Professor Tom Keane sent an...". To the right of the main photo is a smaller photo of a group of people walking. Below the main photo is another headline: "Sláintecare director resigns as report shows 'significant challenge' in tackling waiting lists". Below this headline is a photo of Laura Magahy, with a caption that reads "The executive director of Sláintecare, Laura Magahy, has announced her resignation, and will leave along...". The RTE logo is in the top left corner, and the Sláintecare logo with the tagline "Right Care. Right Place. Right Time." is in the top right corner. The navigation bar includes links for NEWS, HEALTH, Covid-19, Climate, Ireland, World, Business, Politics, Nuacht, and RTÉ Investigate.



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Thank you for your attention

