

# NATIONAL CANCER STRATEGY 2017-2026

## Implementation Report 2020

#	Recommendation	Lead Agency	Progress to end-2020
1	The Department of Health will ensure that policies under the <i>Healthy Ireland</i> framework are implemented in full and that opportunities to address cancer prevention measures under those policies are maximised. In particular, measures aimed at further reducing smoking levels will be pursued.	DOH	<p>The NCCP has provided input into the HSE's Tobacco Cessation Support Programme and continues to be centrally involved in the smoking cessation effort.</p> <p>In November 2020, a provision of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act which addresses the separation and display of alcohol products in mixed trade retailers, and the advertising associated with those products, came into effect.</p> <p>Following work through 2020, further regulations to restrict price-based promotions of alcohol were signed by the Minister for Health and came into effect 11 January 2021. The purpose of the regulations is to ensure that alcohol products cannot be sold cheaply, or given free of charge, as part of a price promotion or as part of loyalty card schemes.</p> <p>Further provisions relating to alcohol advertising in sport will be considered in 2021, as will legislation to ban the sale of e-cigarette and vaping products to those under 18 years of age.</p>
2	The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) will develop a cancer prevention function, working in conjunction with the broader <i>Healthy Ireland</i> initiative, and will lead in relation to the development and implementation of policies and programmes focused on cancer prevention.	NCCP	<p>The NCCP cancer prevention function continues to participate in, and actively supports, Healthy Ireland and HSE public health programmes.</p> <p>The Irish Cancer Prevention Network, comprising the NCCP, Irish Cancer Society, Marie Keating Foundation and Breakthrough Cancer Research was expanded in 2020 to include the Irish Skin Foundation. The network facilitates collaboration on cancer prevention initiatives, the agreement of consistent evidence-based cancer prevention public awareness messages and support of national programmes.</p> <p>The network delivered a stakeholder webinar in 2020 on cancer prevention and published the Irish Cancer Prevention Network infographic on evidence-based cancer prevention messages. The network continues to provide education sessions and awareness initiatives to health care professionals and to the public on cancer prevention. The Network has developed a HPV lesson plan for inclusion in the junior cycle curriculum.</p>
3	The Department of Health will develop a national skin cancer prevention plan and oversee its implementation as a priority. It will prioritise children, outdoor workers, sunbed users and those who pursue outdoor leisure activities.	DOH	<p>A National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan was launched in 2019. Meetings of the Prevention Plan's Implementation Group continued in 2020, with the early focus on children and outdoor workers.</p> <p>Progress in 2020 included UV information being included in Met Éireann messaging; a greater focus on shade in the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care settings; and support for SunSmart campaigns by national charitable organisations through evidence review and material promotion.</p> <p>Funding from the Sláintecare initiative facilitated the recruitment, in December 2020, of a Cancer Prevention Officer to co-ordinate implementation of the Plan.</p>
4	The NCCP will develop a systematic, evidence-based mechanism to ascertain the potential benefits and the cost-effectiveness of various initiatives (including chemoprevention) which will inform future cancer prevention programmes.	NCCP	<p>The NCCP, in conjunction with the Irish Cancer Prevention Network, is continuing to monitor new emerging evidence, international initiatives and developments in cancer prevention. Planning is underway in relation to a more formalised process of assessment.</p>
5	The HSE will ensure that the appropriate endoscopy capacity is provided in hospitals to allow for the expansion of BowelScreen to all aged 55-74 by end-2021.	HSE	<p>This Recommendation is reflected in the HSE's National Service Plan for 2021 which commits to developing a capacity plan that meets the current endoscopy demand for the screening population, as well as developing a plan, in collaboration with the Department, to facilitate the roll-out of sufficient capacity to support the extension of the BowelScreen programme over time.</p> <p>In 2020, approximately 1,800 patients were referred for further treatment or surveillance from the BowelScreen Programme (a reduction on the previous year, due to the Covid pandemic). The immediate focus will be on the recovery of BowelScreen to pre-Covid levels before the expansion to all aged 55-74 (currently 60-69) is considered further.</p>
6	The NCCP will draw up a plan by end-2017 for the development of an integrated cancer control and surveillance service for defined population subgroups with an inherited familial predisposition to cancer (e.g. breast, ovarian and colorectal).	NCCP	<p>The NCCP previously undertook a stakeholder survey, through the designated cancer centres, as part of their assessment of the level of genetic testing infrastructure.</p> <p>In 2020, the results of the survey were used to inform work on a Hereditary Cancer Model of Care, covering the identification and assessment of those with possible hereditary cancer risk, referral for counselling and testing when indicated, and coordinated surveillance when required. While progress on the Model of Care has been delayed by Covid-19, the NCCP is looking at an Advanced Nurse Practitioner led model for the management and follow-up of those with a known risk of an inherited familial predisposition to cancer.</p>
7	The NCCP and the HSE Health & Wellbeing Directorate, in partnership with the voluntary sector, will develop a rolling programme of targeted multimedia based public awareness and education campaigns, aimed at the early detection of specific cancers and with particular focus on at-risk populations.	NCCP	<p>The NCCP, in conjunction with the Irish Cancer Prevention Network, is continuing to assess the progress being achieved on international prevention initiatives and to monitor evidence regarding the efficacy of potential new cancer public awareness programmes.</p> <p>A National Lung Cancer awareness campaign, developed in conjunction with voluntary sector organisations was due to be launched in April 2020, but was delayed due to Covid-19. However, the NCCP collaborated with the voluntary sector to conduct lung cancer public awareness campaigns in September and November 2020 and continues to work with community organisations to develop and promote cancer awareness in local communities.</p>
8	The NCCP, working with the ICGP and the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee, will develop a three year plan to enhance the care pathways between primary and secondary care for specific cancers. The plan will set out criteria for referral to diagnostics and incorporate the requirements for additional Rapid Access Clinics.	NCCP	<p>The updated GP Guidelines for Referrals to the Symptomatic Breast Disease Clinics were finalised in Q4 2020 and will be implemented in 2021.</p> <p>In 2020, the NCCP continued to monitor the referrals of cancers that fall outside existing Rapid Access Clinics, including through the pilot Rapid Access Haematuria Clinic in Roscommon University Hospital. Engagement with the Irish Council of General Practitioners and the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee is ongoing.</p>
9	The NCCP will ensure that cancer referrals from a GP into a hospital will be made electronically. Each Hospital Group will facilitate the phasing in of e-referral. This will be completed by the end of 2022.	NCCP	<p>A total of 52,343 electronic cancer referrals were received in 2020 (a 13% increase on 2019). A Pilot project for the Pigmented Lesion Electronic Cancer Referral Form commenced in Cork in September 2019 and continued through 2020.</p>
10	The Department of Health will liaise with the Health and Education authorities with a view to increasing places in Third Level Institutions for the training of radiographers and sonographers.	DOH	<p>In 2018, the number of places on the undergraduate degree programme on radiography provided by UCD was increased from approximately 45 to 100 per year, in line with increasing demand. This will start to impact on availability of radiographers from mid- 2022.</p>
11	The NCCP, working with the other Directorates in the HSE, will develop criteria by end-2018 for the referral of patients with suspected cancer, who fall outside of existing Rapid Access Clinics, for diagnostic tests. The NCCP will ensure, through these criteria, that GPs will have direct access to cancer diagnostics within agreed timelines.	NCCP	<p>The Early Cancer Diagnosis Steering Group continued its work through 2020. The Steering Group facilitated the publication of a new GP Colorectal Referral Pathway which is currently being implemented and it has commenced consideration of approaches for improving access to gynaecological cancer services.</p> <p>The improvements made for GP access to diagnostics, generally, in the context of Covid-19 and Winter Plan, have impacted positively on cancer patients. The NCCP continues to work with the Radiology Programme to develop direct access to radiology diagnostics nationally. Direct access to MRI, CT, X-Ray and DEXA scans is available to GPs in each of the nine Community Health Organisations nationally for GMS patients.</p>

12	The NCCP will further develop the model of care for cancer to achieve integration between primary care and hospital settings at all stages of the cancer continuum, from diagnosis to post treatment care.	NCCP	<p>The National Cancer Survivorship Needs Assessment was published in 2019. The Needs Assessment outlines key areas in which integration between primary care, the community sector, and hospital settings can be improved. The NCCP is worked to progress issues arising from the Needs Assessment in 2020 and has ongoing GP support for the integration effort.</p> <p>The Model of Care for Psycho-Oncology was approved in September 2020. This will help to increase the awareness of all supports available to ensure patients and their families can access services when needed. Also, <i>Best Practice Guidance for Community Cancer Support Centres and Services</i> was launched and disseminated in 2020.</p> <p>Proposals on the Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy (SACT) Model of Care were nearing completion at end 2020 and these will range across hospital, primary care and home settings.</p>
13	Patients diagnosed with cancer will have their case formally discussed at a multi-disciplinary team meeting. The NCCP, working with the Hospital Groups, will oversee and support MDT composition, processes and reporting of outcomes.	NCCP	<p>All common tumours are discussed at MDT meetings. The rollout of the National Cancer Information System (NCIS) will allow for the collection of MDT information on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for colorectal cancer was signed-off in 2020. SOPs for haematology, melanoma and breast cancer are already in place.</p>
14	The NCCP, working with the other Directorates in the HSE and with the Department of Health, will develop a rolling capital investment plan, to be reviewed annually, with the aim of ensuring that cancer facilities meet requirements.	NCCP	<p>Capital funding under the National Development Plan 2018-2027 will facilitate the development of cancer facilities in line with the National Cancer Strategy. The plan includes the continued development of Radiation Oncology to meet patient demand, expansion and improvement of medical oncology units and day wards, improvements in diagnostic facilities and investment in aseptic compounding infrastructure, as well as the development of a comprehensive cancer care centre.</p> <p>In 2020, video bronchoscopes were replaced in all cancer centres. Also, a business case for an equipment replacement programme over a number of years in the St. Luke's Radiation Oncology Network, covering Beaumont, St James's and St Lukes Hospitals in Dublin, was approved.</p> <p>As part of a Brexit-related initiative, funding was provided to increase resilience in chemotherapy compounding in acute hospitals and so reduce Ireland's reliance on outsourced compounding from UK manufacturers. 17 additional staff were recruited in 2020, with a further 10 posts to be recruited in early 2021.</p>
15	The Department of Health will ensure that investment in infrastructure, facilities, personnel and programmes in the designated cancer centres will have a goal of ultimately developing at least one comprehensive cancer care centre that will optimise cancer prevention, treatment, education and research during the Strategy period.	DOH	The development of a comprehensive cancer care centre has always been seen as a matter for the latter part of the Strategy period. It is included in the National Development Plan 2018-2027. In 2020, the Department and the NCCP commenced consideration of the steps required towards the implementation of this recommendation.
16	The NCCP will ensure that consultant appointments for radiology, endoscopy and histopathology, where necessary, are made in conjunction with appointments in other disciplines such as surgery and medical oncology.	NCCP	Following a review of Rapid Access Clinics, additional Radiology and Pathology support has been allocated to each designated cancer centre. The positions associated with this have been approved and are at various stages of recruitment.
17	The NCCP will appoint a National Lead for Cancer Molecular Diagnostics for solid and liquid malignancies.	NCCP	<p>Work was on-going at end 2020 in the HSE to progress the recruitment of a National Lead in Genomics.</p> <p>When the National Lead in Genomics is in place, the NCCP will be in a position to better define the role of a National Lead for Cancer Molecular Diagnostics for solid and liquid malignancies and then to pursue the appointment.</p>
18	The NCCP will establish a Steering Group for Cancer Molecular Diagnostics, chaired by the National Lead. This Steering Group will set out the framework for the organisation, location and delivery of cancer molecular diagnostic services.	NCCP	The Steering Group will be established following the appointment of a National Lead for Cancer Molecular Diagnostics (Recommendation 17).
19	The NCCP will further develop the Programme for Hereditary Cancers to ensure that evaluation, counselling, testing and risk reduction interventions are available as appropriate, and that services are available to patients on the basis of need.	NCCP	A Model of Care for Hereditary Cancer is being developed (Recommendation 6). Increased staffing was previously provided to the Hereditary Cancer service in St. James's Hospital, including a Consultant in Cancer Genetics who took up post in 2020, to support this service. In November 2020, St. James's commenced a trial of a remote genetics testing provider, with the aim of improving turnaround times for testing during the Covid-19 period.
20	The HSE will ensure that the existing cancer genetics services are amalgamated into one National Cancer Genetics Service and will identify the most appropriate site for its location.	HSE	The NCCP has completed scoping of cancer genetics services in all designated cancer centres (Recommendation 6). The identification of a site for a National Cancer Genetics Service has been impacted by Covid-19 and will be progressed as soon as practicable.
21	The NCCP will draw up a plan setting out the number/location of designated cancer centres in which surgery will take place for the various tumour types. Timescales for the implementation of the plan will be included for each tumour type.	NCCP	Some progress was made in 2020 on the implementation of the further centralisation of cancer surgery, particularly in relation to colorectal (South/Southwest Hospital Group) and gynaecological cancers (Saolta Hospital Group), despite the Covid-19 pandemic. In light of the impact of the pandemic on theatres, ICU and HDU capacity, much public time-sensitive cancer surgery was undertaken in private hospitals in 2020.
22	In line with the National Plan for Radiation Oncology, public sector radiation oncology facilities in Dublin, Cork and Galway will be expanded to meet patient demand and a planned National Programme of Equipment Refreshment and Replacement will be implemented across the Strategy period.	NCCP	<p>Full transition to the new radiation oncology facility in Cork University Hospital was completed in Q4 2020.</p> <p>Enabling works were completed for the radiation oncology facility in University Hospital Galway and the main construction commenced in August 2020.</p> <p>Design work was progressed for the planned expanded radiation oncology facilities in Beaumont Hospital.</p>
23	The NCCP will examine the model of care for patients receiving oral anti-cancer medicines and recommend steps to ensure that all patients receive such medicines in a safe and effective manner, with appropriate and proportionate supports, both in the hospital and community setting.	NCCP	An Implementation Group is working to ensure implementation of the Model of Care for Oral Anti-Cancer Medications. An Oral Anti-Cancer Medicine training programme has been developed by the Irish Institute of Pharmacy (IiOP) and has been made available to pharmacists since July 2020.
24	The NCCP will develop appropriate MDT, centralisation and treatment arrangements to meet the diverse needs of patients with haematological cancers.	NCCP	<p>The standard protocol for haematology multi-disciplinary teams in hospitals has been agreed. A Haemato-Oncology Expert Advisory Group is in place and a Project Lead has been assigned.</p> <p>Initial data gathering has taken place to support the objective of better meeting the diverse needs of haematological cancer patients. Progress in 2020 was delayed due to Covid-19.</p>
25	The NCCP will develop a systematic, evidence-based mechanism to prioritise the establishment of MDTs for further rare cancers. The centralisation of diagnosis, treatment planning and surgical services for these cancers will be organised in line with best international practice.	NCCP	<p>National chemotherapy regimens have been developed for drugs for a number of rare cancers.</p> <p>Quality indicators are being used to assess MDT functioning. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been developed for Colorectal MDTs.</p> <p>Research work is being progressed for the development of a systemic evidence-based approach for further rare cancers.</p> <p>Funding was provided to Beaumont hospital for the development of a national service for penile cancers in 2020.</p>
26	The HSE will ensure that an age appropriate facility is designated for adolescents and young adults with cancer within the new children's hospital.	HSE	<p>The new Children's Hospital will provide age-appropriate facilities and will increase inpatient cancer capacity by 50%.</p> <p>Adolescent and Young Adult beds will increase from 2 to 6. The facilities will feature a den for Adolescent and Young Adult patients, which is aimed at meeting some of the particular needs of this age group.</p>

27	The HSE will develop closer links, on a hub and spoke model, between the National Centre for Child and Adolescent Cancer and the other designated cancer centres to provide appropriate and flexible transition arrangements for adolescents/young adults. This will include the joint appointment of adolescent/young adult oncologists and haemato-oncologists and the provision of age-appropriate psycho-social support for these patients.	HSE	The NCCP Clinical Lead for Children Adolescents and Young Adults (CAYA) was appointed in 2019. Since then, a scoping exercise of current CAYA cancer services has been completed, which included a site visit to Glasgow Teenage Young Adult (TYA) services.  The NCCP CAYA Cancer Clinical Leads Group was set up in April 2019 to oversee and implement the recommendations of the National Cancer Strategy and enhance the practice and delivery of CAYA with cancer nationally.  An NCCP CAYA Assistant Director of Nursing was appointed in Q4 2020 and a CAYA Consultant for Crumlin/SJH is currently being recruited.
28	Links between cancer services and geriatric services will be strengthened, facilitated by the appointment of a National Clinical Lead in Geriatric Oncology in the NCCP.	NCCP	The NCCP has appointed a Geriatric Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) to support the specialised geriatric oncology service at Waterford University Hospital. The National Clinical Lead in Geriatric Oncology was not progressed in 2020 due to pressures arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.
29	The NCCP will appoint a National Clinical Lead for Psycho-oncology to drive the delivery of networked services.	NCCP	A National Clinical Lead for Psycho-Oncology is in place. A Psycho-Oncology Advisory Group was established in 2020.
30	Each designated cancer centre will establish a dedicated service to address the psycho-social needs of patients with cancer and their families. This will operate through a hub and spoke model, utilising the MDT approach, to provide equitable patient access.	NCCP	The Model of Care for Psycho-Oncology was approved in September 2020 and implementation is underway. Six psycho-oncology MDT posts are in place and recruitment of the remaining two is underway.  <i>Best Practice Guidance for Community Cancer Support Centres &amp; Services</i> was published in August 2020 and has been disseminated to centres & services nationally. A self-assessment for community cancer support centres commenced on a pilot basis. The NCCP also published guidance on the safe operation of Cancer Support Centres in the context of Covid-19 in August 2020 and supported this with a webinar for centres.  In response to Covid-19, a virtual psycho-oncology service (Together 4 Cancer Concern) was established in April 2020 by the NCCP in conjunction with Cancer Care West and the Irish Cancer Society. This service provided psychological support for cancer patients and their families through the pandemic.
31	Designated cancer centres will have a sufficient complement of specialist palliative care professionals, including psycho-oncologists, to meet the needs of patients and families (such services will be developed on a phased basis to be available over seven days a week).	NCCP	During 2020, the NCCP liaised with the National Clinical Programme for Palliative Care (clinical lead, nurse lead and programme manager) with a view to ensuring that the National Cancer Strategy objectives, cancer service developments and the HSE palliative care programme are aligned. This work has a particular focus on the provision of appropriate psycho-oncology support to meet the needs of patients and families.
32	Oncology staff will have the training and education to ensure competence in the identification, assessment and management of patients with palliative care needs and all patients with cancer will have regular, standardised assessment of their needs.	HSE	Implementation of the Palliative Model of Care is being progressed and the NCCP is linking in with this work. In consultation with the Palliative Care Programme, the NCCP is working on the development of two Advanced Nurse Practitioner posts in Palliative Care.
33	The HSE will oversee the further development of children's palliative care to ensure that services are available to all children with a life limiting cancer.	HSE	A sub-group of the Steering Group for Children, Adolescents and Young Adults is assessing children's palliative care services, in conjunction with the Clinical Lead for Children, Adolescents and Young Adults.  The use of a handheld treatment summary record started in June 2020 in Children's Health Ireland (CHI) and was rolled out to all patients by the end of the year.
34	The NCCP will ensure that each hospital has a clearly defined framework for cancer patient safety and quality.	NCCP	A national framework on cancer patient safety and quality is in place. The National Cancer Quality Steering Committee oversaw the implementation of a pilot project at St James's Hospital Lung Cancer Service in 2020 and this has been evaluated. A second pilot project is being planned.
35	The NCCP will define focused cancer patient experience surveys to incorporate treatment and survivorship in line with HIQA's standard approach for the National In-Patient Acute Care Patient Experience Survey.	NCCP	The National In-Patient Acute Care Patient Experience Survey is conducted in May each year in a partnership involving HIQA, the HSE and the Department of Health. Cancer treatment and survivorship was selected as priority areas for inclusion in the National Care Experience Programme for 2021. However, due to Covid-19, the programme has been delayed and it is now likely that the survey on cancer patient experience will be progressed in 2022.
36	The NCCP will develop, publish and monitor a programme of national quality healthcare indicators for cancer care, involving both process and outcome measures, in line with international standards.	NCCP	The Quality Indicators Working Group (Department of Health, NCCP and NCRI) has undertaken a national review of available data and is considering the optimum national quality health indicators for cancer care in Ireland. The NCCP, in 2020, reviewed international quality healthcare indicators for cancer, including the work of the Innovative Partnership for Action Against Cancer (iPAAC) EU Joint Action. This work will inform the development of national quality health indicators in Ireland.
37	The NCCP will develop further guidelines for cancer care in line with National Clinical Effectiveness Committee (NCEC) Standards. Audits will also be developed in accordance with the NCEC Framework for National Clinical Audit.	NCCP	Colon and Rectal Clinical Guidelines were approved by the NCEC in November 2020. Guidelines have now been published for 8 cancer tumour types.  National Clinical Guidelines for Prostate Cancer and Gestational Trophoblastic Disease were updated in July 2020 and the update of the Breast Cancer National Clinical Guideline for Radiation Oncology commenced in November 2020.  Throughout 2020, in response to Covid-19, the NCCP rapidly developed, adapted and disseminated national guidelines on cancer care to support cancer services across systemic anti-cancer therapy delivery, radiation oncology, surgical oncology and diagnostic services. This work facilitated the continuation of cancer services through the pandemic.
38	The Department of Health will ensure that patient representatives are involved in policy making, planning, practice and oversight of cancer services at local, regional and national levels.	DOH	The Department of Health strives to ensure that patient representatives are included in the oversight of the development and implementation of all cancer policies and services, particularly through the Cancer Patient Advisory Committee. At a local level, Patient Advisory Liaison Services (not limited to cancer) have been established to offer support, advice and information on hospital services to patients, family members, the general public and hospital staff.  Patients participate on the NCCP's Community Oncology, Survivorship and Psycho-Oncology Working Groups, with wider consultation and collaboration with patient groups and advocacy organisations taking place on an on-going basis. In 2020 patients engaged directly with the NCCP cancer prevention network to develop videos sharing their own stories and encouraging patients with symptoms of cancer to attend their GP during the Covid-19 pandemic. An NCCP Forum which aims to match patients/patient representatives with appropriate groups and projects within the NCCP has also been established.
39	The Department of Health will establish a Cancer Patient Advisory Committee to provide input into the development of programmes for patients with cancer. Membership of this committee will reflect the diverse nature of patients living with the effects of cancer, and will ensure that the needs of patients living in more remote areas are represented.	DOH	The Cancer Patient Advisory Committee met regularly during 2020. Issues considered by the Committee include the impact of Covid-19 on cancer patients, an acute oncology project in Cork University Hospital which aims to reduce the number of oncology patients admitted through the Emergency Department, the hereditary cancer nurse-led service in St James's Hospital and the new Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.  Efforts are being made to introduce topics to the Committee at an earlier stage in their development so that members can more readily impact on improving the patient experience.
40	All hospitals will offer patients a Patient Treatment Summary and Care Plan as part of their support. These plans will allow patients to store information about their cancer, their cancer treatment and their follow-up care. The plans will also inform future healthcare providers.	NCCP	Work on a Minimum Data Set for Treatment Summary was progressed in 2020 in consultation with designated cancer centres. This process will support the development of Patient Treatment Summary and Care Plans for specific tumour sites.  A Colorectal Patient Passport is in pilot phase in 7 hospitals. Evaluations at patient level and service level is planned at 6 months and 12 months, after which any changes to the passport design will be made before national rollout. Consideration will then be given to commencing the patient passport for other tumour sites.
41	The NCCP, in conjunction with the ICGP, cancer centres, the Irish Cancer Society and cancer support centres, will conduct a Cancer Survivorship Needs Assessment to ascertain the most suitable model of survivorship healthcare. The Needs Assessment should be completed by the end of 2018.	NCCP	The National Cancer Survivorship Needs Assessment (August 2019) was used in 2020, to inform the development and implementation of policy and services to meet patient needs. The needs assessment includes a model of care for Cancer Survivorship.

42	The NCCP, in conjunction with the cancer centres, will develop shared care protocols for patients with cancer following treatment. These protocols will span the hospital and primary care settings.	NCCP	<p>The issues pertaining to patients following treatment are being considered by the NCCP's Survivorship Working Group. During 2020, the Group progressed work on the standardisation of follow-up/surveillance protocols to inform the development of Patient Treatment Summary and Care Plans.</p> <p>The Colorectal Cancer Leads Group drafted a plan to facilitate the roll-out of pilot projects for the follow-up and surveillance of colorectal cancer patients as soon as this is considered appropriate in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The NCCP is working to scope the possibility of using a similar approach for breast, prostate, lung and gynaecological cancers.</p>
43	Designated cancer centres working with the NCCP, the ICGP, primary care services, patients and voluntary organisations will develop and implement survivorship programmes. These programmes will emphasise physical, psychological and social factors that affect health and wellbeing, while being adaptable to patients with specific survivorship needs following their treatment.	NCCP	<p>The Cancer Thriving &amp; Surviving Programme is being implemented across acute and community settings. Leader training sessions continue in various locations to facilitate expansion of the programme nationally.</p> <p>The NCCP is collaborating with the Irish Cancer Society to establish peer-supported End of Treatment Survivorship Workshops (LACES - Life After Cancer Enhancing Survivorship) in designated cancer centres. The workshops will be run virtually due to the impact of Covid-19. Filming and content has been completed and a pilot will be launched in Q2 2021.</p> <p>Pilot Women's Cancer Survivorship Clinics were established at Cork University Hospital and the Mater Hospital in 2020 as part of the Women's Health Initiative which aims to improve health and wellbeing for women cancer survivors at all stages of their journey.</p>
44	The central role of the NCCP in ensuring that the National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026 is implemented across the health service will be strengthened, including through the use of Service Level Agreements, and through a direct role in financial allocations to Hospital Groups under Activity Based Funding.	NCCP	<p>The NCCP continued to work proactively to advance cancer services across the HSE, and with hospitals and community services, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. An important part of this work was the rapid reviews of clinical guidelines, carried out in conjunction with clinicians. The NCCP is continuing their central role in the HSE in ensuring the implementation of the National Cancer Strategy, with funding being utilised in a targeted way to maximise improvements in the quality and accessibility of cancer services.</p>
45	The NCCP will work with the private sector providers to achieve voluntary participation in cancer data collection, audit, compliance with guidelines and reporting of outcomes.	NCCP	<p>It is envisaged that cancer data from private sector providers will be more accessible when legislation covering the licensing of hospitals is enacted. The Government approved the text of the Patient Safety Bill in December 2019. The Bill has passed the First and Second Stage and will next progress to Dáil Committee Stage.</p>
46	The NCCP will establish a National Cancer Research Group by end-2017 to improve the coordination of cancer research, to foster a supportive environment for research within the health service and the universities, to set research priorities in line with the overall cancer strategy, to seek to ensure that funding allocation is linked to these priorities and to work to achieve continuity of funding.	NCCP	<p>The National Cancer Research Group is in place and includes representatives of the Department, NCCP, Health Research Board and Irish Cancer Society. Progress in 2020 was limited due to the focus on the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>
47	The HSE will ensure that clinical cancer research, and the staff who deliver it, become a fully integrated component of cancer care delivery.	HSE	<p>The NCCP continues to work with the central research function in the HSE to promote an increased focus on research and is endeavouring to ensure the inclusion of time for the pursuit of research interests in contracts for Consultants and Advanced Nurse Practitioners.</p> <p>The NCCP supported the development of nursing/allied health professional research through the Cancer Nursing Research Award 2019/2020.</p> <p>The NCCP survivorship programme collaborates with the Irish Cancer Society in regard to the latter's research grant calls, with a view to supporting on-going work on cancer survivorship.</p>
48	The NCCP and the National Cancer Research Group will examine mechanisms to ensure that newly appointed cancer consultants and Advanced Nurse Practitioners have protected time to pursue research interests in their new posts.	NCCP	<p>Time for the pursuit of research interests has been included in the job specifications of many consultants and Advanced Nurse Practitioners. The NCCP has interacted directly with some of the newly hired Advanced Nurse Practitioners in 2020 to consider how best to incorporate research into their work.</p> <p>However, with the focus on the continuation of cancer services during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, protected time for research was necessarily limited.</p>
49	The NCCP will appoint a National Clinical Lead for Cancer Nursing. This person will work with other Directorates in the HSE and with the Department of Health to determine an integrated nursing leadership infrastructure for cancer nursing services at national, regional and local levels to support practice and research.	NCCP	<p>A National Clinical Lead for Cancer Nursing is in place. In 2020, her role included working with stakeholders in relation to nursing research, dealing with the appointment of 26 acute oncology nurses to avoid cancer patients being admitted through Emergency Departments, and linking with the Irish Cancer Society in relation to Daffodil Centre Nurses working directly to support acute oncology services in hospitals in the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The Clinical Lead has also progressed work on a workforce development plan, unscheduled care initiatives and a Community Oncology Nursing Programme Cost Comparison Study.</p>
50	The NCCP, aided by a cross-sector group, will draw up a comprehensive workforce plan for cancer services. This will include an interim assessment of staffing needs at medical, nursing and health & social care professional levels by mid-2018.	NCCP	<p>Current workforce, the supply of skilled personnel, and projected future demands are all subject to continual assessment and revision. Developments in clinical guidelines, pathways, practices and technologies, existing and projected skills supply, the timing of commencement of new initiatives, and external factors serve to influence the profile of resource requirements. The NCCP works closely with a range of bodies in planning the cancer services workforce.</p> <p>In 2020, the NCCP commenced a workforce planning exercise for cancer nursing, led by the National Clinical Lead. Significant research was also undertaken with regard to workforce planning, international standards &amp; best practice for Medical oncology. A workforce plan for Radiation Oncology has been in operation since 2017.</p>
51	The HSE will ensure that all hospitals provide the National Cancer Registry with data related to cancer in an appropriate timeframe to allow for sufficient surveillance of cancer rates and outcomes in Ireland.	HSE	<p>A Data-Sharing Agreement between the HSE and the National Cancer Registry is in place covering all public hospitals. Individual data-sharing agreements with many voluntary and private hospitals are also in place, and work was progressing at end-2020 to finalise the outstanding cases.</p> <p>2020 saw significant advances in electronic data transfer. From mid-2020 the NCRI has been collecting data remotely from all public hospitals. This has facilitated the continued collection of data during the Covid-19 pandemic and has increased the completeness and timeliness of NCRI data.</p>
52	The Department of Health will review the scope of the National Cancer Registry with a view to increasing and optimising the use of available data to drive improvements in cancer care for patients.	DOH	<p>The National Cancer Registry Strategic Plan 2020-2022, launched in September 2020 sets out the high-level goals of the NCRI over the next 3 years. The Plan facilitates an enhanced contribution to the development of cancer policy by the NCRI and will enable the NCRI to more effectively address its core functions, while expanding the cancer patient data it collects.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan focuses on increasing and optimising the uses of available data to drive improvements in cancer care for patients. The Plan supports the delivery of the recommendations of the <i>Report of the Scoping Inquiry into the CervicalCheck Screening Programme</i>, as they pertain to the NCRI.</p>