



**Covid-19 Update**

**2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020**

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## **NHI.IE – Your online resource for Covid-19 guidance**

Visit the dedicated Covid-19 section of the NHI website for a raft of resources and guidance specific to support nursing homes. The website is being updated on a continuous basis to guide nursing homes during this public health emergency.

## **Enhanced public measures for nursing homes**

Yesterday morning we circulated the [Department of Health's Enhanced Public Health Measures For Management Of Disease In Residential Care Settings](#). The measures have been introduced by NPHE (the National Public Health Emergency Team) to support disease management in nursing home care. As per our communication, we are engaging with the Department with regard to the practical implementation and roll-out of the measures.

We have received a number of queries regarding the taking of temperature and would advise a number of nursing homes are already implementing such practice. Nursing homes should note the Department asks that, "as a matter of urgency" nursing homes should be aware of the actions and progress their commencement and implement with immediacy where possible.

The twice daily temperature checks for staff have been introduced so that the Provider can take immediate action to send the staff member home if a temperature over 38 degrees Celsius is detected. It is recommended this is performed prior to each shift commencing and mid-way through the shift. It would also be advisable that one person is allocated to do this rather than staff self-reporting to ensure there is no room for error.

A simple checklist is fine to record and there is no need for any special additional thermometers for this.

## **Deployment of carers to nursing homes**

This morning's front page Irish Times article reads: [Carers to be redeployed to nursing homes](#). The article informs: "Hundreds of home carers are to be redeployed to nursing and residential care homes to plug staffing gaps caused by outbreaks of Coronavirus," the article states. NHI has been engaged with Home and Community Care Ireland and the HSE with regard to the measure. Agreement has been reached that carers for low dependency people will be redeployed and made available to support nursing homes in providing care. The responsibility for payment will still rest with the HSE. Effectively what is being entailed is a recalibration of community care services to support nursing homes during Covid-19 and other residential settings.

The HSE will engage with nursing homes with staffing requirements with view to sourcing carers from a local network to support care provision. The carers will only be redeployed where family are available to support the care needs of the people in the community who would have lower level requirements. The measure is being implemented on a temporary basis to support nursing homes during Covid-19 and the carers will then be redeployed in the community.

## **HSE Repository: Clinical Guidance and Evidence**

A HSE Repository for Interim Clinical Guidance and Evidence for the clinical community is now online. This website is mobile/tablet friendly and is available through the following link: <https://hselibrary.ie/covid>. The content of the site is not meant to replace clinical judgment or specialist consultation, but rather strengthen clinical management of patients and provide up-to-date and relevant guidance.

The site contains:

- HSE Interim Clinical Guidance to provide consistent advice to the clinical community in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is based on best available knowledge at the time of completion, written by clinical subject matter experts (SMEs) working with the HSE. These SMEs have both expertise and experience of treating patients for the specific health conditions covered by the guidance.
- Research evidence summaries prepared by the HSE National Library Evidence team and other stakeholders.
- Facility to request additional published Covid-19 evidence in relation to specific clinical questions
- Links to point of care tools and educational resources

The guidance is iterative in nature and will be updated as the situation changes.

This guidance must be read in conjunction with [National HSE Infection Prevention and Control \(IPC\) Guidance for Possible or Confirmed COVID-19](#)

To enable easy access through your mobile/tablet devices insert and save <https://hselibrary.ie/covid> in your device. If you have any queries please contact [clinicaldesign@hse.ie](mailto:clinicaldesign@hse.ie)

## **Updated: Infection Prevention and Control Guidance including Outbreak Control in Residential Care Facilities (RCF)**

The HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre) has updated [Preliminary Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Infection Prevention and Control Guidance including Outbreak Control in Residential Care Facilities \(RCF\) and Similar](#). The changes within this document are:

- Edited definition for outbreak of COVID-19 in RCF (important to note for HIQA notifications)
- Added information re contact management
- Updated guidance re outbreak control team

## **HSE Webinar slides now available: Guidance for COVID-19 in Nurse-led Residential Care Facilities (RCFs)**

On 26<sup>th</sup> March the HSE hosted a webinar Guidance for COVID-19 in Nurse-led Residential Care Facilities (RCFs). It was Chaired by Dr Siobhan Kennelly- National Clinical and Group Lead Social Care, Older People.

[Click here to access the training slides which include interactive links which will bring you to relevant on-line guidance and resources.](#)

And click to access the [Preliminary Clinical and Infection Control Guidance for COVID-19 in Nurse- led Residential Care Facilities \(RCF\)](#) that was the basis for much of the guidance provided.

## **Access to HSELand**

HSELand contains over 170 eLearning programmes, resources, assessment and planning tools to support HSE staff in their role and personal and professional development. HSE has been in contact with the HSE with regard to access for training supports that would feature on HSELand and can support nursing homes during Covid-19. Temporary access has now been provided.

Visit [www.hseland.ie](http://www.hseland.ie) and register on Section A of the registration page under the option of 'Private Care Homes'. [Provided here is guidance re registering.](#)

## **Media Engagement**

Within Tuesday's Briefing we provided detail regarding extensive media engagement undertaken by NHI the early part of this week. The media engagement has been continuous. Further to our Briefing Monday, you are since advised of:

[The Tonight Show, TV3, Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> March](#)

[Prime Time, RTE, Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March](#)

[Ireland AM, Virgin Media, Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April](#)

Newstalk Breakfast, Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April

[Irish Independent, Why has it taken so long to devise a plan for those in such a vulnerable situation? Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May](#)

[An insult to our nursing homes, Daily Mail, Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April](#)

[Crisis team calls for patients to be left in homes, Irish Times, Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April](#)

[HIQA to launch virus infection control advice hub for nursing homes, Irish Examiner, Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April](#)

Media engagement is ongoing and we will continue to brief nursing homes with regard to national media engagement.

## Care Monitor & Nursing Matters online resources

Care Monitor and Nursing Matters and Associates have developed resources on COVID-19 Infection Control and Prevention. Click to now access:

[Nursing Matters Covid-19 Policy and Emergency Plan for Residential Care settings](#)

[A series of training videos that inform regarding infection prevention and control, transmission-based precautions, hand hygiene, use of PPE, Covid-19 and the healthcare environment.](#)

## Difficulties accessing GP?

We've also been receiving representations re access to GPs. The following advice may assist you engaging with them remotely.

- Some GPs will undertake a desktop review and send scripts to pharmacy.
- The option is presented by some for videocall or the option to healthmail the problem and the GP may then prescribe and treat in writing until further notice.
- Use the traditional telephone or Epic so the GP has remote access to all resident records.
- An image / images can support GPs in diagnosis during this emergency, with Epic presenting safe and secure software for transferring to GP.

## Guidance re Healthcare Workers Requiring Passive Monitoring

We have received a number of queries re healthcare workers requiring passive monitoring and Covid-19. Passive monitoring is where the worker monitors for symptoms themselves whereas active monitoring is where the employer increases the level of monitoring to include twice daily temperature checks, daily telephone calls, etc. [Information leaflets in this regard here.](#)

We refer to the guidance issued by the HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre) for occupational health workers ([click to read](#)) and the specific guidance below.

### 9.1. Essential' HCWs Requiring Passive Monitoring

9.1.1. Other HCWs who may be considered for a derogation from management (see appendix 1):

- A HCW, with a household contact who is symptomatic and self-isolating, awaiting testing/results.
- A HCW, with a household contact who is symptomatic, but does not fit the criteria of a suspect case, and will not therefore be tested.
- A HCW who had symptoms, but did not fit the criteria of a suspect case, was not tested and is now at least 48 hours symptom free.

9.1.2. These HCWs may be allowed to return to work with passive monitoring, i.e. self-monitoring of symptoms, for the remainder of the 14 days of restricted movement.

9.3.3. Passive self-monitoring must be carried out by these HCWs under the direction of their manager.

9.3.4. Any HCW who becomes symptomatic must immediately self isolate if and contact Occupational Health to arrange testing.

9.3.5. Managers who may be using this derogation process can be provided with the 'Essential Healthcare Worker requiring Passive Monitoring' Leaflet, to issue to these HCWs –

### **Pronouncement of death arrangements**

We are receiving a large number of calls seeking guidance and clarity regarding pronouncement of death arrangements during Covid-19. We have been in contact with the HSE again in this regard and are informed a document is being finalised for issue to nursing homes.

### **HIQA Memo re PPE Equipment**

Click here to read Memo from Dr Lynda Sisson regarding PPE guidance for nursing home staff that was issued yesterday by HIQA CEO Phelim Quinn. It informs: “One of the main drivers of calls to the helpline [informed of within [Sunday update](#)] over the last week are queries in relation to PPE with the highest number of queries from staff in Nursing Homes. Many of the callers are anxious for their own safety and that of their family members.” The memo refers to the HPSC guidance document: [Current recommendations for the use of Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) in the management of suspected or confirmed COVID-19](#)

### **Optimisation of Vitamin D status for Enhanced Immuno-protection against Covid-19**

We have been contacted by Dr Daniel McCartney, lecturer in Human Nutrition and Dietetics at TU Dublin, regarding a paper they are publishing in the Irish Medical Journal at the end of this week. This paper highlights the critical importance of vitamin D in enhancing resistance to respiratory infections including Covid-19 and Dr McCartney presents it has important practice and policy implications for the nursing home sector in Ireland. We are now providing the paper:

- [Optimisation of Vitamin D status for Enhanced Immuno-protection against Covid-19](#)
- [Lay Summary: Optimisation of Vitamin D status for Enhanced Immuno-protection against Covid-19](#)

### **HPSC Webinar: IPC Interim Guidance for COVID-19 for Community Residential Facilities and in-patient facilities outside of acute hospitals**

**Topic:** IPC Interim Guidance for COVID-19 for Community Residential Facilities and in-patient facilities outside of acute hospitals

**Presented by HPSC AMRIC (Antimicrobial Resistance) Team:** Prof. Martin Cormican, National HCAI Clinical Lead and Mary McKenna, IPC Asst Director of Nursing,

**Date and time:** Friday, April 3, 2020 from 10-11am,

**Event number:** 141 972 966

**Event password:** covid

**Pre-register for the event:** <https://hse-webinar.webex.com/hse-webinar/onstage/g.php?MTID=e1accc1122f7a6b330b8b10409d2db78f>

When you join the webinar you can listen to it over the computer but we are advised sound quality is better over the phone:

**Irish dial in number:** 015260058 / Access code: 141 972 966

### **LHP Skillnet: Covid-19 Emergency Management Education Programme**

**Learning Objective:** This programme will provide you with the tools to manage the impact of Covid-19 in your nursing home, and to minimise the risks to your staff, clients and business. The programme consists of two online webinar sessions. The limit of participants on each session is 20. Each session takes 90 minutes.

#### ***Webinar Session 1 – Preparing and Planning:***

Thursday 9th April 10am - 11.30am

#### ***Webinar Session 2 – Manage, Control and Evaluate:***

Friday 10th April 10am - 11.30am

When you register, you will be able to purchase HCI's Comprehensive Resource Pack. Though not mandatory, it is HIGHLY recommended that you select this option. It provides a suite of documents, templates, policies and procedures. Sample documents include:

- *Covid-19 Roles and Responsibilities,*
- *Business Continuity Plan,*
- *Liaison Responsibilities (for Residents/Families/Staff/HSE/HSPC/HIQA),*
- *PPE Policy and Procedure*
- *IPC Audit Tools*  
*IPC Policies and Procedures Covid-19 Update(#12).*

**Pricing:** HCI original cost (including Resources Pack) - €1,225.



LHP Skillnet has reduced the cost of the Webinar (incl. both sessions) to €70 per person, and the Comprehensive Resource Pack is €550 per nursing home. The resource pack is optional, but highly recommended.

To book, please fill the form [here](#). Booking will close at 4pm on Wednesday 8th April.

### **Decontaminating Medical Gas Cylinders potentially contaminated with Covid-19**

You are reminded of guidance issued by HIQA to all registered providers: [Decontaminating Medical Gas Cylinders potentially contaminated with Covid-19](#)

### **Live music concert this Friday for residents**

We informed last week Sive is a musician and arts practitioner who engages with older people and people with dementia across a variety of healthcare settings. She performed an online concert for residents in nursing homes to tune into last Friday and we now inform she will be performing for residents and staff again this Friday. It will be streamed on Facebook at 11am and you can tune into it by visiting this link:

[www.facebook.com/voicesofspringchoir/videos](http://www.facebook.com/voicesofspringchoir/videos)

### **REMINDER: HCA Recruitment & Induction Programme with Department of Employment for Jobseekers**

NHI are pleased with the initiative taken by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) and LHP Skillnet in collaboration with NHI. DEASP are running an intensive HCA recruitment and induction programme for jobseekers (in excess of 5,000) on the live register. For suitable applicants, training will take three weeks and successful applicants will be available to enter the workforce immediately. The recruitment drive commenced yesterday and the DEASP have already received 103 emails and 17 phone calls from applicants. Indeed, some already have qualifications so they will be ready to go straight to work in nursing homes. All applications are submitted directly to DEASP. NHI are cognisant of the strain our members are under with staffing and want to re-assure you that efforts are being made on all fronts to help alleviate your staffing needs.

### **PROMOTE [nhirecruitment.ie](https://nhirecruitment.ie)**

You are reminded yesterday, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March, NHI went 'live' with <https://nhirecruitment.ie/>. We're urging you to promote the website that allows unemployed people to register their interest in fulfilling roles within NHI Member homes during the Covid-19 emergency.

You can utilise the promo image below for utilisation on your website and social media channels. We hope the new portal will support Members in filling key roles and support your staffing complement during the emergency. [Download the image here](#).

**NHI RECRUITMENT DRIVE**

FULFILLING EMPLOYMENT DURING COVID-19

WORK IN YOUR LOCAL NURSING HOME

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST AT

**[www.nhirecruitment.ie](http://www.nhirecruitment.ie)**



[www.nhi.ie](http://www.nhi.ie)

 [@NursingHomesIRE](https://twitter.com/NursingHomesIRE)

**nhi**

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