



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

ANNEXES TO REVIEW OF WORKPLACE ARRANGEMENTS IN IVEAGH HOUSE ON 17 JUNE 2020



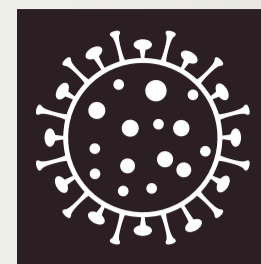
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

ANNEX A



Overview of Reopening Phases

Commencing May 18th



Coronavirus
COVID-19
National
Programme

1 (Commencing 18th May)

2

3

4

5

Community Health



5km travel limit.
Avoid unnecessary journeys.
Small groups meet outdoors.

5km to 20km.
Avoid unnecessary journeys.
Retail hours and visits for cocoons.
Short home visits in small groups
Easing of funeral restrictions.

5km to 20km.
Avoid unnecessary journeys.

Travel beyond home area
Short but slightly larger home visits.
Small social gatherings (e.g. small weddings, baptisms).

Travel beyond home area
Some larger social gatherings (e.g. weddings).

Education & Childcare



Childcare for essential healthcare workers.
Opening of schools and colleges for teachers.

Childcare for essential healthcare workers.
Opening of schools and colleges for teachers.

Phased opening of crèches and pre-schools for children of essential workers.

Phased opening of crèches, childminders and pre-schools for all.

Schools, 3rd level and adult education centres opening on a phased basis for 2020/21 academic year.

Economic Activity & Work



Phased return of outdoor workers
Remote working continues for all that can do so.

Limited return to onsite working subject to compliance capability
Remote working continues for all that can do so.

Return to low-interaction work.
Remote working continues for all that can do so.

Return to work where employees cannot remote work.
Staggered hours.
Remote working continues for all that can do so.

Phased return to work across all sectors.
Remote working continues for all that can do so.

Retail, Services & Commercial Activity



Retail that is mainly outdoor + home-ware, opticians, motor, bicycle & repair, office products, electrical, IT, phone sales & repair open.
All subject to social distancing.

Small retail outlets with control of numbers open.
Marts open.
All subject to social distancing.

Open non-essential retail outlets with street level access.

Gradual easing of restrictions on higher-risk services. e.g. Barbers and hairdressers

Further easing of restrictions higher-risk services. e.g. shopping centres, tattoo, piercing.

Cultural & Social



Open outdoor public amenities, incl. pitches, tennis courts and golf courses, tourism sites, beaches and walks. Outdoor sporting and fitness activities, in groups max. four people, resume
All subject to social distancing.

Open public libraries.
Small group team sports training (not matches) resume.
All subject to social distancing.

Open playgrounds. / Behind closed doors sporting activities. Open cafés and restaurants providing on-premises food & beverages—all subject to social distancing and strict cleaning protocols

Museums, galleries and places of worship re-open. Sports and team leagues (e.g. Soccer & GAA) and swimming pools.
All subject to social distancing.

Pubs, bars, nightclubs, theatres, cinemas and casinos. Close physical contact sports. Open gyms, exercise, dance studios and other indoor and outdoor festivals, events and mass gatherings.

Transport & Travel



Social distancing and hygiene measures continue for public and private transport as passengers increase.
Specific measures at ports and airports.

Numbers restricted and monitored. Social distancing and hygiene measures continue for public and private transport as passengers increase.
Specific measures at ports and airports.

Travel restrictions on numbers travelling to and in major urban centres. Social distancing and hygiene measures continue for public and private transport as passengers increase. Specific measures at ports and airports.

Gradually decrease restrictions in major urban centres. Hotels etc. on a limited occupancy basis re-open. Bars remain closed. Social distancing and hygiene measures continue. Specific measures at ports and airports.

Resume tourist travel to offshore islands. Social distancing and hygiene measures continue for public and private transport as passengers increase. Specific measures at ports and airports.

Criteria for progressing from one phase to the next are:



Progress of disease



Testing and contact tracing



Secondary morbidity and mortality



Healthcare capacity/resilience



Shielding at-risk groups

The details of this phased re-opening of our country are now available on [gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie)
Please stay the course, and please continue to save lives by staying apart.

Supported by the Government of Ireland.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Dear Colleagues

As we move into the summer months, and shortly from Phase 1 into phase 2 of the [Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business](#), I wanted to update you on work underway at HQ to ensure continued safe and productive working at home and abroad.

As you may have seen, HR recently conducted a **Remote Working Survey** to assess the collective initial experience of home working within the Department at HQ. It also sought to understand colleagues perceptions of how we as a Department were doing to accommodate the process and what if anything we could consider to improve the overall experience during this time. Further work will be done on assessing the challenging experiences that our colleagues have been through at home and abroad and what extra supports we can offer. The level of response was very strong and you will find a snapshot of the survey's analytics [here](#).

From the survey, it is clear that many officers welcome the flexibility and time-savings that home working brings and most would like to maintain an element of this pattern in future. However it is also apparent that many of you during this period are feeling increasing strain whether from home working arrangements, childcare and caring pressures, bereavement, the isolation of not seeing colleagues and friends, families and loved ones and the continued uncertainty around COVID19. These experiences have been echoed by our colleagues abroad and I want to reassure you that we are working to address some of these challenges.

The survey has also highlighted that, for many of you, continued working from home without your regular office equipment is far from ideal and unfortunately we do not have comprehensive solutions right now to address this. **To keep our offices equipped for the return to the workplace, the Heads of ICT and PMU default position is that no ICT or office equipment be removed by officers. Where colleagues feel they have an exceptional requirement to retrieve peripheral ICT equipment and/or e.g. chairs for home working, guidance and forms issued by [ICT](#) and [PMU](#) Units must be adhered to.**

To facilitate **approved removal** of ICT and/or office equipment, the **Department's buildings in Clare Street, Clonmel Street and Hatch Street will be open from 09:00 to 17:00 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 June until 26 June**, at which stage it will be reviewed. Iveagh House and Harcourt Street remain open each day Monday to Friday during normal office hours. Please contact PMU or local management about other buildings. Where a staff member feels it was not possible to operate without peripheral ICT items, or cannot add their own peripherals, they may continue to use temporarily relocated peripherals, provided they agree to the conditions advised by ICT, and complete a short approval form [here](#). We accept that in some cases a staff member may need an office chair or footrest. In such cases, the items may be removed by the officer, if specifically approved by PMU, on the terms and conditions set out in the following [e-mail template](#). The fully completed email template must be sent to propertymanagement@dfa.ie.

A **Covid19 Safe Working Group** has also been established with colleagues from across Corporate Services Division (including HR HQ and Abroad and the Health and Safety Officer) and the Passport Office participating. Informed by the Government's [Return to Workplace Safely Protocol](#) and [HSA guidance](#), the Group is developing guidance and making the practical changes to ensure our buildings will be ready for any phased return of staff, as and when appropriate at HQ. Those abroad will have already seen the [Mission Guidance](#) which was developed by the Group and there will be ongoing consultation and updates provided. The work of this group will of course be hand-in-hand with the ongoing efforts of our HR teams who will continue to guide on all issues relating to staffing, leave and posting arrangements and wellbeing and mental health supports. **Updated FAQs** are available [here](#) which all colleagues are encouraged to familiarise themselves with.

It should be noted that Government guidance is that remote working will continue at HQ throughout the five stages, and beyond for all employees who can do so. Public service employees in Ireland should continue to stay at home, unless they need to attend the workplace for an essential service, that cannot be done from home. Any decisions on attending the workplace at HQ should not be taken without consultation with the *Safe Working Group* as it has been emphasised that a consistent approach across Government needs to be taken at this time.

We are asking for your continued patience as we continue to navigate all of the implications of this new workplace reality. The *COVID19 Safe Working Group* will continue to liaise closely with colleagues at HQ and missions to develop solutions and to ensure consistent approaches at home and abroad. Further guidance for all staff, including training resources, will be made available in the coming weeks.

Our overarching principle at all times will be the protection of the health and safety of staff and others and taking all reasonable steps to minimise risk.

Take care,

Austin Gormley
Director General
Corporate Services Division



An Roinn Caiteachais
Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe
Department of Public
Expenditure and Reform

Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19

In relation to working arrangements
and temporary assignments across
the Public Service

INCLUDING UPDATES TO 15th JUNE 2020

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Background

This guidance document for Civil and Public Service employers consolidates and supersedes previous guidance and FAQs issued relating to Civil and Public Service working arrangements and temporary assignments during COVID-19. These arrangements apply to all Civil and Public Service employees.¹

At the forefront of the national response to COVID-19, our focus is to support the health and wellbeing of all our citizens. To achieve this, and to keep delivering crucial services to society, especially to the most vulnerable and at-risk, we must work together as a unified public service.

Employers need to be as flexible as possible to help their employees manage this unique situation and to enable employees in this situation to be as productive as possible so that they can continue to support the efforts of the State.

Temporary assignments across the Civil and Public Service are a necessary response by Government to the unprecedented national crisis arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The FAQs have been prepared to assist employees and management in the Civil and Public service to understand the process, rules and expectations associated with temporary assignments across the public service.

These FAQs will be continually updated in response to queries that are received centrally. The most up-to-date version of these FAQs will be available at www.gov.ie/per. New and updated questions for the week are noted in the document.

¹ Individual employers will need to identify which employees fall into the category of public service employees.

Principles which apply to the treatment of COVID-19 infections

The general principles to apply to the treatment of COVID-19 infections in the Civil and Public Service include:

1. Subject to expert public health advice in light of developing circumstances on COVID-19, the general principles or FAQ material may be subject to updating or other amendment. Employers retain the right to withdraw or amend provisions in light of developing circumstances.
2. Obligations under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 to ensure the safety and welfare of employees at work.
3. Flexibility for alternative working arrangements, especially home working, must be implemented where possible. This will enable employees, who are not ill, to continue working and to ensure social distancing and support for those essential workers who need to attend the workplace.
4. As noted in the [Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business](#), remote working continues throughout the five stages, and beyond, for all employees who can do so.
5. Employers need to ensure that all workplaces have implemented robust return to workplace procedures, where not already in place, and that all procedures comply with the [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#).
6. [Circular 2/1976, which covers special leave with pay](#)² should apply to periods of medically/HSE recommended self-isolation, and also to medical diagnoses of COVID-19 infection where the employee is not well enough to work from home. **Sectors will need to amend these FAQs to refer to their own special leave circulars or arrangements as necessary.**
7. The general principles applying to the management of sick leave, for example the requirement of employees to contact managers, and for ongoing contact with employees who are on special leave for this purpose, will apply.
8. Any special leave with pay granted for the purpose of self-isolation or any diagnosis of COVID-19 will not be counted as part of the employee's sick leave record. The application of special leave with pay will apply for the number of days advised by the HSE/doctor. Appropriate medical/HSE

² Special leave with pay for employees who are not required to work due to COVID-19 should be based on **basic salary and fixed allowances only**. This excludes premium payments.

confirmation/advice of the need to self-isolate and/or a diagnosis of COVID-19 will be required. See below FAQs for further details.

9. When granting special leave with pay, as per clause 31.2 of [Circular 2/1976](#), “the officer will be expected to comply at once with any directions which may be given by [their] Department and to take all practicable steps to resume duty as soon as possible. Otherwise, unless adequate reason is shown for non-compliance, the question of withholding pay will arise”.
10. In the event of non-compliance with the provisions of special leave with pay (including the requirement to provide bona fide³ confirmation of self-isolation/diagnosis of COVID-19) existing procedures, including disciplinary measures may be invoked.
11. These arrangements apply in the case of COVID-19 as a notifiable infectious disease.
12. Civil and Public Service employers need to ensure that special category health data is processed legally within data protection legislation.

³ Bona fide in relation to a representation or communication means in good faith and well founded in fact. The employer reserves the right to request further confirmation.

1. Attendance in the workplace/office during COVID-19

1.1 Who should attend the workplace?

[The roadmap for reopening society and business](#), which was launched on 1st May 2020, sets out how the COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted. It should be noted that remote working continues throughout the five stages, and beyond, for all employees that can do so. Public service employees will continue to stay at home, unless they need to attend the workplace for an essential service that cannot be done from home. Recovery of society and the economy is a priority for the public service. The civil and public service must show leadership and support those members of society who need to attend the workplace outside the home by enabling as many of their own employees to continue working from home for as long as possible.

Some workplaces have been open and employees providing services in the workplace throughout the restrictions. Employers should ensure that the [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) is reviewed for any additional issues that should be considered to ensure compliance with the Protocol for those employees who are already working onsite.

1.2 Should employees who are at high risk for serious illness from COVID-19 attend the workplace?

Employees in the high risk category need to take extra precautions to protect themselves from coronavirus. Information in relation to these measures are available from the [HSE](#).

Employers should continue to prioritise and facilitate this group in terms of flexible working arrangements, including working remotely.

All employees who can work from home should continue to do so. Only where organisations deem it essential that people need to attend the workplace should they work on site.

1.3 What to do if an employee is identified as being at very high risk (extremely vulnerable) and is advised to cocoon?

The HSE have identified a further group who are at very high risk and the details of this group are available from the [HSE](#). The advice for this group is to cocoon and advice on this is also available from the [HSE](#).

Employers should advise employees to self-declare if they believe that they are at very high risk and are advised to cocoon and should be facilitated to work from home to the maximum extent possible.

If an employer is unsure whether or not an employee falls into the very high risk category, advice can be sought from the Occupational Health Service associated with their organisation.

1.4 What to do if an employee becomes unwell in the workplace showing symptoms of COVID-19?

Important Note: While every effort is made to provide comprehensive guidance, it will not be possible to cover every eventuality. Sectors may need to refer to their own emergency protocols or arrangements as necessary where these exist.

It is important to emphasise that any employee who is feeling unwell should not attend the office. This applies to any transmissible illness during this Covid-19 emergency period.

The health and wellbeing of our employees is of utmost importance. These guidelines should read in conjunction with [HSE advice](#) which is being updated on an ongoing basis.

If someone becomes unwell in the workplace with [symptoms](#) such as cough, fever, difficulty breathing, the unwell person should be sent home to self-isolate and advised to contact their GP.

If going home is not immediately possible, then the person should be moved to a room or area where they can be isolated behind a closed door, such as an office, to protect both the employee's privacy and the welfare of other employees. If it is possible to open a window, do so for ventilation.

Arrangements should be made for cleaning of all surfaces the person has come into contact with.

Employers should refer to the Return to Work Safely Protocol the Health and Safety Authority, and the [HPSC](#) website for guidance.

1.5 What happens if a colleague is diagnosed with COVID-19?

The HSE will inform any employees via the contact tracing process who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and employee confidentiality is essential at all times.

2. Flexible working arrangements during COVID-19

2.1 What flexible working arrangements are available during COVID-19?

Following the Government announcement on 1 May 2020 to launch [the roadmap for reopening society and business](#), remote working continues throughout the five stages for all employees that can do so. Public service employees will continue to stay at home, unless they need to attend the workplace for an essential service that cannot be done from home. All steps should be taken to increase the scope for remote working and all opportunities and flexibilities need to be explored by employers to facilitate home working arrangements for all other employees.

Employees should follow any guidance issued by their organisation in relation to home working. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) has produced [guidance for temporary home working arrangements](#) during COVID-19. The Data Protection Commission have also issued useful guidance on [protecting personal data when working remotely](#).

Where workplace attendance has been deemed essential, employers should implement arrangements which support segregation of the workforce and social distancing measures. For example, this could include flexible shifts, staggered hours, longer opening hours and weekend working.

2.2 What if an employee does not have the facility to work from home?

Employers should explore every possible avenue of making a suitable arrangement to facilitate home working. Managers should maintain regular contact with employees who have been advised to restrict their movements and continue to explore opportunities for work which can be performed at home both inside and outside the organisation as services come under increasing pressure. If remote working in an employee's current role is not feasible, then the assignment of work may be outside their usual core duties/a new role as required by the public service for example: contact tracing, payment processing or any other work identified. Employers should agree arrangements with their employees in this regard.

2.3 How should flexi-time operate during the period of COVID-19?

Due to the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on normal working arrangements, it is crucial that we show solidarity as a unified One Public Service. Many areas of the public service are under extreme pressure, and in order to keep delivering essential services to all our citizens we need flexibility and adaptability. The operation of traditional flexi-time/attendance management rules do not support the flexible arrangements and agility required during this extraordinary situation.

The normal operation of flexi-time or equivalent attendance management rules, including any flexi-time accruals and deficits, is to be temporarily suspended during the period of COVID-19 to facilitate the required new ways of working across the public service. This does not preclude organisations from using clocking in and out arrangements that apply. Any balances accrued by employees before the suspension of flexible working hours arrangements can remain and be held over until the COVID working arrangements are no longer in place.

3. Temporary assignments

3.1 How is the continuity of essential public services and attendance at the workplace being managed across the public service?

It is a matter for each organisation's senior leadership team to determine which services are currently essential to business continuity in the context of its organisational Business Continuity Plan, and to identify specific individuals (including contingency for COVID-19 illness/back up) required to manage the delivery of these services.

All employees who can work from home should continue to do so. Only where organisations deem it essential that people need to attend the workplace should they work on site. This is in line with the public health guidance to avoid all non-essential journeys and limit social interactions.

Where employees do not have access to remote working employers should explore every possible avenue of making a suitable arrangement. Employers should continue to explore opportunities for work which can be performed at home, both inside and outside the organisation, as critical services come under increasing pressure.

It is the responsibility of employers to provide practical support and assistance to ensure that employees are kept engaged and provided with productive work as deemed relevant by the organisation.

Organisations are asked to identify employees who are deemed to be releasable in the context of their business continuity plan for the temporary assignment scheme (Circular 07/2020 – See Appendix 1), which is managed through the Public Appointments Service. The temporary assignment scheme will be used to ensure critical services continue to be delivered over the coming weeks and months.

Given the evolving nature of the crisis, organisations will need to ensure that their engagement with this process is kept under continuous review to ensure that employees are placed where they are most needed to deliver critical services.

Managers of employees who have been instructed by their local HR to register through the Public Appointments Service temporary assignment scheme should maintain regular contact with their team members and continue to assign their normal duties as far as is practicable pending any temporary assignment.

3.2 Why are temporary assignments required?

Our primary focus in the Civil and Public Service is to support the health and wellbeing of all our citizens. To achieve this, and to keep delivering the essential services to society, especially for the most vulnerable and at-risk, we need to be flexible and responsive in how work is managed, including coming together and working as a unified public service.

3.3 How will employees be identified for temporary assignment?

All Civil and Public Service organisations are included in the scheme and may offer or request temporary assignees.

It is a matter for each organisation's senior leadership team to determine which services are currently essential to critical business continuity in the context of its organisational Business Continuity Plan, and to identify employees (including contingency for COVID-19 illness/back up) required to manage the delivery of these services.

Local HR will work with their senior leadership team to identify employees for release (including those currently on probation) and will contact the employees in question to advise them of the process that should be followed as set out in clause 3.6.

3.4 What organisation will employees be assigned to?

This is an evolving situation and demands may change. The temporary assignment scheme will be used to ensure essential public services across all the public sector continue to be delivered over the coming weeks and months.

While the initial call is from the Health Service Executive, many other essential public services may require additional short term support.

As we move through the crisis, these requirements will become clearer.

3.5 What employees will be included in the temporary assignments scheme?

Employees at all grades and work patterns/arrangements across the Public Service will be included in the scheme.

3.6 How will employees be informed, and what will they be required to do?

Employees will receive a notification from their Local HR which will include a link to an online questionnaire.

Employees will be required to complete the questionnaire for automatic upload to the Public Appointments Service (PAS). This questionnaire can also be completed on mobile phone, tablet or laptop for ease of use.

3.7 Do all releasable employees have to complete the Temporary Assignment questionnaire?

Yes, all employees identified by their organisation as currently releasable, are required to complete the linked online questionnaire which they will have received from their Local HR. This is to seek to ensure the most appropriate skills and location match, where possible, as vacancies arise.

3.8 What information is requested in the Temporary Assignment questionnaire?

Employees will be asked to provide the following information: Current Sector; Name; Private and Office email, postal address and telephone number; Current job category (Junior/Middle/Senior management); Grade; Current Skills/Experience e.g. Data Entry / Customer Service etc.; Work location of interest (3 county locations can be selected); Clinical/Medical skills (if any).

This is to seek to ensure the most appropriate skills and location match, where possible, as vacancies arise.

3.9 Will all employees who complete the questionnaire be temporarily assigned?

The temporary assignment scheme will be used to ensure essential public services continue to be delivered over the coming weeks and months.

Employees who have registered with the Public Appointments Service will be assigned as required to support the delivery of essential public services as needs are identified by public service bodies in consultation with the Public Appointments Service.

3.10 What roles will employees be temporarily assigned to?

Employees may be temporarily assigned to work in a different role and organisation in order to support the delivery of essential public services. The Public Appointments Service will advise of role details upon assignment.

3.11 What location will employees be temporarily assigned to?

In completing the questionnaire, employees are asked to indicate one, two or three preferred county location choices in order of preference. If staff only have one preference, then only one location should be indicated.

The actual location will be determined by the particular needs and circumstances of the requesting organisation.

3.12 Is there a potential to work remotely while on temporary assignment?

There may be potential for remote working, depending on the requirements of the role in question, and the availability of technical resources.

3.13 When will employees be expected to start their assignment?

The temporary assignment scheme will be used to ensure essential public services continue to be delivered over the coming weeks and months.

Employees who have registered with the Public Appointments Service will be assigned as required to support the delivery of essential public services as needs are identified by public service bodies in consultation with the Public Appointments Service.

3.14 How long will the assignment be for?

It is envisaged that the temporary assignments may be for an initial period of anything from several weeks to three months, with a possible extension where required. The situation will be reviewed in line with COVID-19 contingency measures. Local HR and employees will be notified of any developments.

3.15 Will employees transfer to a different employer for pay purposes for the temporary assignment?

No, assigned employees will remain as employees of and be paid by their parent organisation. They will however transfer temporarily to a different employer to carry out essential duties and direct management and supervision will be provided by a temporary line manager.

3.16 Can employees on Temporary Assignment return to meet business needs in parent organisation if required?

Where more urgent business needs arise, employees may be required to return to their parent organisation.

3.17 Is Travel and Subsistence (T&S) payable to staff on temporary assignment?

Staff who are temporarily assigned should be treated as being headquartered at the new location. In this regard, normal Public Service and Revenue rules on non-payment of T&S for home to work travel apply.

3.18 Will a temporary assignment affect eligibility on the Civil Service Mobility scheme?

No, the temporary assignment will not affect the eligibility or waitlist position on the Civil Service Mobility scheme.

Moves under the Civil Service Mobility scheme are currently suspended for the duration of the crisis, however, employees can still make applications.

UPDATED 3.19 What pay arrangements apply while on assignment under the Temporary Assignment scheme?

Employees who are temporarily assigned under the Scheme will continue to receive their basic salary, any fixed, periodic, pensionable allowances in the nature of pay and other pensionable remuneration that they are in receipt of at the date of assignment. The payment of any allowance to an employee which is due to cease before the end of the temporary assignment period will terminate as previously scheduled.

Updated 15 June 2020:

For employees on temporary assignment in the NSSO customer group, they will remain 'as is' for all functions on the HRMS/equivalent system. The temporary line manager will be required to keep all HR records for forwarding to the parent organisation upon completion of assignment.

3.20 Can employees claim overtime while on temporary assignment?

As a rule, overtime is not expected to arise for employees on temporary assignment and public servants re-assigned under these arrangements will continue to adhere to their already contracted weekly working hours.

However, should this arise, overtime may be paid in the temporary assignment post only where it has been identified as being necessary in that role; has been approved at the appropriate managerial level, and agreed by HR in the employer organisation or paying authority; and is in accordance with the agreed procedures applying to that sector/organisation. Where a staff member is already in receipt of an allowance for extra hours, and where this allowance is being retained, overtime will not also be payable in the temporary assignment.

3.21 Where can queries be raised in relation to remuneration while on temporary assignment?

For individuals: Queries arising in relation to remuneration while on temporary assignment should be raised in the first instance with the employee's own local HR Unit.

For HR units: These rules are for general application. Where there are particular sectoral arrangements which give rise to questions, these should be directed to the Public Service Pay and Pensions Division of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for consideration.

4. COVID-19 special leave with pay arrangements

4.1 When does special leave with pay apply during the COVID-19 crisis?

Special leave with pay should only apply when an employee is advised to self-isolate and is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or had a positive test. Medical or HSE advice should be followed. Special leave with pay for COVID-19 is being used in place of sick pay. Employees are not entitled to days in lieu of bank holidays whilst in receipt of special leave with pay.

The HSE sets out the latest criteria for self-isolation at:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/self-isolation-and-limited-social-interaction.html>

4.2 Should absence due to COVID-19 illness be recorded as special leave with pay or sick leave?

If an employee is displaying symptoms and/or has a positive test for COVID-19 then it should be recorded as special leave with pay. Special leave with pay for COVID-19 is being used in place of sick pay. As noted, special leave with pay should only apply when an employee is advised to self-isolate and is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or had a positive test. Medical or HSE advice should be followed.

4.3 How should advice of the need to self-isolate be recorded?

Appropriate medical/HSE confirmation of the need to self-isolate and/or a diagnosis of COVID-19 will be required. In the event that written confirmation is not available, the recording of medical or HSE advice to self-isolate will take the form of a self-declaration. This does not mean that employees can voluntarily choose to self-isolate. Medical/HSE advice will be required, however the reporting of same will take the form of a self-declaration. How this will work in practice will vary based on the unique circumstances of each employer. For example,

employers may wish to implement a self-declaration form⁴ on return to work, which is completed by the employee and signed off by the employer.

The employer should clearly communicate to employees the information required to be provided and the notification process. See guidance at the end of this document for more details on notification requirements.

Self-declarations and any accompanying certification should be retained by Local HR on the individual's personnel file and should be subject to audit. For employers within the NSSO customer group the notification process will include the requirement that the employee, on return to work, completes a special leave with pay application on the PeoplePoint system, which must then be approved by their manager. The manager should ensure that this is complied with.

4.4 An employee is on special leave with pay, can they claim the DEASP⁵ Illness Benefit for COVID-19?

Public Service employees who can avail of the special leave with pay for COVID-19 are excluded from claiming the special DEASP COVID-19 illness benefit payment. Any instances of civil or public servants found to be in receipt of both special leave with pay and the COVID-19 illness benefit will be subject to disciplinary action.

4.5 What happens if, after the period of self-isolation, an employee does not have the COVID-19 virus?

When the recommended period of self-isolation is passed, please follow medical advice and/or HSE guidelines on return to work/return to duties when working from home.

4.6 What if an employee does not have COVID-19 but has another illness?

Any non-COVID-19 illness will be recorded as ordinary certified sick leave and the usual rules governing [sick leave](#) will apply.

⁴ See Appendix 6 for example of self-declaration form

⁵ DEASP is the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

4.7 What is the process for a return to the workplace post having had COVID-19 infection?

Please note that this FAQ relates to a return to work in the workplace. These arrangements may not preclude employees from returning to work at home at an earlier stage if this is feasible, depending on the situation of each case. **Note: Sectors may need to refer to their own arrangements as necessary where these exist.**

The Civil Service CMO advises that in confirmed COVID-19 infection, an employee needs to be 14 days post onset of symptoms and also 5 days fever free (which may run concurrently) before returning to the workplace. Please note that the 14 days is from onset of symptoms and not the date of receiving a positive COVID-19 test result.

Employees should be asked by their manager to complete a self-declaration form (see Appendix 6 for a sample form). Where at all possible, this should be accompanied by a medical certificate, stating the date of fitness to return to work. Managers should be mindful of confidentiality and should also alert the employee to any follow up actions that are required on their return to work.

Self-declarations and any accompanying certification should be forwarded by managers to and retained by Local HR on the individual's personnel file and should be subject to audit. NSSO customer group employees should be advised not to forward these forms to the NSSO but rather to their own organisation.

4.8 What is the legal basis for processing employee data in relation to COVID-19?

Civil and Public Service employers are obliged to provide a safe workplace, which may include the processing of health data in order to ensure that safety. Articles 6(1)(c), Articles 9(2)(b) and (g), along with section 53 of the Data Protection Act, 2018 (which permits the processing of special categories of personal data for purposes of public interest in the area of public health) will likely be the most appropriate legal bases for processing this data. For further information please visit the [Data Protection Commission website](#).

5. Leave and other arrangements during COVID-19

5.1 Is special leave with pay available for caring responsibilities?

There is no special paid leave available for COVID-19 caring arrangements during this time. All forms of flexible working must be considered including working from home and/or working adjusted hours to facilitate employees to balance work and caring responsibilities. If employees are not set up for remote working at present, they need to continue to remain available to work, and their employer should identify work that can be given to them. Employers should be looking at alternative arrangements e.g. staggering hours, wider opening hours including weekend work, looking at temporary assignment etc. This will be a standard approach across the entire public sector.

If the person cannot work outside the home and cannot perform their current role remotely, the employee is still to be considered as actively on duty and available to work. Employers need to be flexible and innovative in terms of ensuring that their employees remain as productive as possible during this time. If the employer cannot assign work to them remotely, then the employee can/will be assigned work outside of their usual core duties i.e. potentially a new role. This should be continuously reviewed by management to ensure that employees are placed where they are most needed to deliver critical services. There will be temporary assignments in the public sector under the principle of one Public Service to deal with this crisis. What this means is that any employee can be assigned work outside their usual core duties/a new role as required by the Public Service.

Any employee who wishes to avail of existing leave allowances during this time is entitled to have such requests considered by their employer, as always, including parental leave, annual leave etc.

5.2 What arrangements are in place for childcare for essential healthcare workers?

In circumstances where one parent/guardian/partner is an essential healthcare worker, the other parent/guardian/partner will be supported by their public sector employer to remain at home to care for the child(ren) so as to ensure that the essential healthcare worker is able to go to work.

In the first instance, flexible working arrangements will be put in place for the other parent/ guardian/partner such as working from home or working adjusted hours/ shifts. Though not anticipated, in the event that flexible arrangements do not allow the essential healthcare worker to attend work it will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

5.3 Living with high risk individuals – should employees be granted special leave with pay?

Special leave with pay does not apply in such circumstances. Employers should facilitate flexible working including working from home where possible in these circumstances. Where it is not possible to perform one's role at home and the employee is required to attend a workplace as an essential worker, they should follow the HSE guidelines on social distancing to minimise risk of transmission.

Please refer to the HSE advice at

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/protect-yourself.html>

There are other flexible working options that employers can offer to employees in addition to home working arrangements e.g. staggered hours, wider opening hours. These measures can help facilitate segregation of the workforce and social distancing as well as support employees in managing caring responsibilities at home (including facilitating shared caring arrangements).

As always, any employee who is seeking to avail of existing leave allowances during this time is entitled to have such requests considered by their employer including annual leave, carer's leave, etc.

5.3 How should annual leave be taken during COVID-19?

Although social distancing and COVID-19 is expected to continue for a number of months, managers should realise the importance of making sure that employees are still using their annual leave entitlement. Taking a break from work from a health and wellbeing perspective is a chance to recover from the demands of work. The benefits of taking annual leave are not limited to going on holiday; it can also be the taking time away from work to spend on personal interests. Even without COVID-19, time away from work is directly correlated with reducing stress. Regular breaks from work have been shown to reduce ill health and overall absenteeism. Managers should ensure that their team members are availing of annual leave in a way that supports wellbeing, and also ensures that their team is supported to take their statutory minimum entitlement.

Employers should facilitate requests for annual leave where possible so that once the crisis passes, organisations can meet increased demand without having to cater to a large volume of annual leave requests. Section 20 (1) of the Organisation of Working Time Act provides that the times at which annual leave is granted are determined by the employer. In that regard, the employer should have regard to the opportunities for rest and recreation available to the employee but also the need for the employee to reconcile work and any family responsibilities.

5.4 Requests to cancel or reschedule pre-booked leave (e.g. parental or annual leave)

Where an employee wishes to cancel pre-booked leave (e.g. parental or annual leave) this may be facilitated once it is in line with the normal rules applying in the relevant sector. Flexibility during this time, from both employers and employees, is advisable. This flexibility should be based on the individual circumstances of each case, with regard to balancing the needs of the business and the employee.

5.5 Can Shorter Working Year be rescheduled/cancelled during the COVID-19 crisis period?

The expectation is that any shorter working year arrangement that is scheduled will go ahead as planned. Where there is a business requirement, it may be possible for employers to cancel/postpone shorter working year with the agreement of the employee. In exceptional circumstances employers may agree to defer at the employee's request, subject to business requirements.

5.6 How should probation be managed during COVID-19?

A flexible and pragmatic approach to the management of probation for both new entrants and promotions should be adopted at this time. If possible and practical, the assessment of a probationer's performance should continue. This can take place remotely. For those staff whose probation process continues, managers should ensure that they have clearly defined objectives and duties that continue to be evaluated on an ongoing basis, as part of the usual probationary process. Managers should continue to support and develop these individuals in their roles.

If in exceptional circumstances it is not possible to proceed with the probation process it may be paused. A probationary period which has been paused will be resumed when the probationer returns to their original role. If a probation process

is to be paused, local HR Units should formally and clearly communicate this to these individuals from the outset.

5.7 Can public sector employees on unpaid leave (e.g. parental leave etc.) claim the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment?

No. The COVID-19 pandemic unemployment payment is designed as a short-term response to those who are fully unemployed as a result of the pandemic. As outlined above there exists a range of leave arrangements, underpinned by job security, which employees can avail of in these circumstances. These, along with the flexible and innovative work attendance methods available from Public Service employers, mean that the pandemic unemployment is not available in such circumstances.

5.8 How should employers treat requests for a working from home allowance?

Following the dramatic rise in working from home (WFH), as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, queries have arisen on WFH policies for public service employees. The following represents the current position, having regard to existing public service arrangements on WFH.

Public service employers should not pay a daily allowance (e.g. €3.20 per day) to their employees in respect of WFH. It is open to employees to make claims directly from Revenue in respect of actual costs incurred in working from home at the end of the relevant tax year, in accordance with the relevant tax laws. Any claim in this regard is solely a matter for the individual concerned. Further details for individuals on how to claim expenses on tax returns are available at: <https://www.revenue.ie/en/tax-professionals/tdm/income-tax-capital-gains-tax-corporation-tax/part-05/05-02-13.pdf>

6. How should public service employers implement the ‘Return to Work Safely Protocol’?

The [Return to Work Safely Protocol](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/covid-19_coronavirus.html) (“the Protocol”) was launched by the Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation on 9th May 2020 to support employers and workers in the measures that will help to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The Protocol outlines the steps that employers and workers must take in order to ensure a safe workplace. Support materials, including checklists can be obtained from the HSA website at the following link:

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/covid-19_coronavirus.html

6.1 When should employers ask employees to return to the physical workplace?

Remote working continues throughout the five stages, and beyond, for all employees who can do so. Only those workers who are required to physically attend the workplace should do so. As outlined in the Protocol, any decisions to re-open a workplace shall be done in compliance with Government and public health advice.

The civil and public service must show leadership and support those members of society who need to attend the workplace outside the home by enabling as many of their own employees to continue working from home for as long as possible.

Whilst the Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business outlines a time period for the five phases, it also notes that the phases are not necessarily linear in their trajectory. The civil and public service needs to ensure that we have the potential to increase and decrease measures in response to the changes that may need to be made to the Roadmap based on public health advice. This in turn means that the public service needs to be as productive as possible in the new ways of working. This is to ensure that we, as a public service, are resilient against any future waves of COVID-19 and that we have a blueprint for the future and any new pandemics.

Employers need to ensure that all workplaces have implemented robust return to workplace procedures, where not already in place, and that all procedures comply with the Roadmap and Protocol.

6.2 What measures do employers need to take?

The [Protocol](#) and [HSA guidance](#) sets out the steps employers need to take in order to ensure the workplace is safe during COVID-19.

Employers should ensure that they have properly implemented the advice in this guidance document and ensure that it is tailored, where necessary, to meet the unique set of circumstances pertaining to each sector and workplace location.

Some workplaces have been open and employees providing services in the workplace throughout the restrictions. Employers should ensure that the Protocol is reviewed for any additional issues that should be considered to ensure compliance with the Protocol for those employees who are already working onsite.

NEW 6.3 Who has responsibility for implementing the Return to Work Safely Protocol?

15 June 2020

All employees have a critical role in ensuring that the procedures of the Protocol are followed to suppress COVID-19 in their workplace. Cooperation between employees, the lead worker representative(s) and the employer are fundamental to ensuring that the measures are adhered to, including maintaining contact logs, completing induction training and answering the pre-return to work questions.

NEW 6.4 When should the pre-return to work form be completed?

15 June 2020

The pre-return to work form is one of the measures designed to assist with the safe return to the workplace following the COVID-19 lockdown.

Any employees who were not present in the workplace prior to the introduction of the Protocol on 9th May are required to complete the pre-return to work questions outlined in the Protocol. The form must be completed at least three days before an initial return (the three day timeframe can include weekends). The questions that should be included are:

- Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days? Yes/No

- Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days? Yes/No
- Are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (i.e. less than 2m for more than 15 minutes accumulative in 1 day)? Yes/No
- Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time? Yes/No
- Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time? Yes/No

Employees should have regard to any changes in their circumstances in relation to the questions and notify their manager/HR if there are any changes.

It should be noted that the contents of the pre-return to work form is considered special category data under GDPR and accordingly sufficient safeguards should be put in place to ensure that the process for collection, processing and storing of the information is proportionate and secure.

NEW 6.5 How should employers appoint lead worker representative(s)?

15 June 2020

The process for the selection and appointment of lead worker representative(s) should be discussed at an organisational level between employers, employees and employee representatives. There should be engagement between management and unions/associations, in line with appropriate arrangements, for engagement on the implementation of the Protocol. The lead worker representative may be a union member, or another member of staff, and will be appointed by the employer. Any arrangements should have the confidence of all parties.

NEW 6.6 What is the role of the lead worker representative(s)?

15 June 2020

The Protocol requires that each workplace should appoint at least one lead worker representative who will assist employees and together with the employer be responsible for ensuring safety measures are being followed. Lead worker representatives should be clearly identifiable, and the employer should ensure they receive the necessary training to carry out the role.

Lead worker representative(s) should:

- Work collaboratively with the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice.
- Assist with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

NEW 6.7 Is temperature testing required?

15 June 2020

Whilst the Protocol notes that temperature testing should be implemented in line with public health advice, the HSE currently does not recommend temperature testing in the workplace, with the exception of certain healthcare settings. If undertaken, the results of temperature testing are considered special category data under GDPR.

Appendix 1: Circular 07/2020

Arrangements for temporary assignments across the Civil and Public Service in response to the challenge of COVID-19

17th March 2020

Circular 07/2020

Dear HR Managers/Personnel Officers

As you are aware, the Government's priority is to ensure the health of the public, whilst at the same time ensuring the continuation of public services, especially essential public services. We all have a part to play in seeing this crisis through, and this will involve finding creative and innovative ways to deliver public services.

COVID-19 has already had an impact on many of our public services. As the situation develops, we must prepare as best we can to ensure the continuity of essential services including, but not limited to, health and social protection.

As part of these preparations, staff who are not working in roles that are currently deemed as essential by their organisations may be temporarily assigned to critical public service roles to deal with the current crisis.

Where possible, organisations are required to facilitate the immediate release of staff, subject to the critical business needs identified in their own organisation's Business Continuity Plan(s).

Key Principles

All assignments will be temporary in nature and:

- Assigned staff will continue to remain staff members of their parent organisation;
- Assigned staff will continue to be paid by their parent organisation;
- Staff skills and experience may be factored into any temporary assignment;
- Local HR will be responsible for the identification and release of staff;
- Appropriate HSE recommended social distancing will be adhered to in the context of workplace assignments;
- Training and up-skilling will be provided as necessary; and

- On completion of the temporary assignment, staff will return to their parent organisation.

It is envisaged that the temporary assignments may be for an initial period of up to three months with a possible extension if required.

You will appreciate that the challenges we are currently facing are unprecedented, and your continued cooperation is vital to ensure that critical services are provided.

Civil Service HR Division

Appendix 2: Guidance for Public Service employees in the instance that they become unwell in the workplace showing symptoms of COVID-19

Note: Sectors may need to refer to their own emergency protocols or arrangements as necessary where these exist.

If, in the course of your working day, you experience [symptoms](#) associated with COVID-19 (e.g. cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties, fever or chills), you should immediately:

1. Report your health concerns, preferably by telephone or email, to your manager. If your manager is unavailable, contact your HR unit.
2. You will be asked to isolate yourself from your colleagues in the first instance – in most circumstances this will mean going home; however, where this is not immediately possible then you should move to a designated space away from colleagues until transport home can be arranged. If possible arrange for someone in your household to collect you rather than using public transport or a taxi – this is for your own welfare as well as the welfare of others. If you must use the latter options practice good hygiene etiquette to limit any potential spread of the virus.
3. Avoid engaging in any direct contact with colleagues and practice good hygiene etiquette as you make your exit.
4. You should immediately contact your GP for further advice.
5. You must call your manager to let them know the outcome of the medical advice. This advice will inform your next steps.
6. If you are advised by your GP that you are well enough to continue working you should do so.
7. If you are required to self-isolate, you should follow all HSE guidelines and keep your manager/HR rep informed, adhering to your organisation's procedures.

8. *Before you return to work you will need to complete a self-declaration and a pre-return to work form.*
9. *You need to inform your employer if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to allow their safe return to work.*
10. *You will need to participate in any induction training provided by the employer on their return to the workplace.*

Appendix 3: Guidance for managers in the instance that an employee becomes unwell in the workplace showing symptoms of COVID-19

Note: Sectors may need to refer to their own emergency protocols or arrangements as necessary where these exist.

If you are notified by an employee that they are experiencing [symptoms](#) associated with COVID-19, please do the following:

1. Reassure the employee that their health and safety and that of their colleagues is the primary concern.
2. Isolate the employee and follow the procedure to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times.
3. Provide a mask for the individual presenting with symptoms if one is available. The employee should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
4. Facilitate the individual presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
5. Assess whether the unwell individual can immediately be directed to go home and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
6. Advise the employee to isolate themselves from colleagues immediately – ideally they should return home or to hospital for medical assessment; however, where this is not immediately possible they should move to a

designated private space away from colleagues until transport home can be arranged.

7. Arrange transport home or to hospital for medical assessment. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
8. Advise the employee that they must call their GP for advice. Advise the employee to call you straight away with the outcome of this advice – you should provide them with your phone number if they don't already have it.
9. Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
10. Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.
11. Ask the employee about their movements around the building in order to identify areas which may require cleaning.
12. Notify HR as soon as practically possible.
13. Contact Facilities Management and request that the employee's workstation and any other relevant areas be cleaned as soon as possible.
14. Await the update from the employee concerned, but do not discuss the case with other colleagues at this stage in order to protect dignity and confidentiality.
15. If the employee concerned has been advised by their GP to return to work, they should do so. You should discuss with them a suitable arrangement to ensure business continuity. Working from home should be implemented where possible. In all instances refer to your organisations return to work arrangements.
16. It is up to managers to discuss with the employee whether they should return immediately or the following day or work from home. If they have been advised to self-isolate, then at all times you should follow all HSE guidelines and adhere to your organisation's procedures.

Appendix 4: Guidance for Public Service employees in relation to COVID-19 self-isolation and restricted movement notifications

If you fall into any of the self-isolation categories as published by the HSE:

1. Telephone your manager⁶ before 10am on the first day of isolation/restricting your movements to update them on the situation.
2. If you are advised to self-isolate/restrict your movements you will be required to give your manager the following information:
 - a. Date of commencement and number of days advised to self-isolate/restrict movements
 - b. Advice received from:
 - GP
 - HSE
 - Hospital
 - Other (you will be required to specify what that is)
3. If you have been advised to restrict your movements as a precaution but you are well, you will be asked to work from home.
4. Please note that Public Service employees cannot claim DEASP COVID-19 illness benefit in cases where they are receiving special leave with pay. Any claim for DEASP COVID-19 illness benefit whilst on special leave with pay will be treated as a disciplinary matter.
5. You may be asked to sign a self-declaration on return to work, including written confirmation of the above details.
6. By applying for special leave with pay, you agree that in the event of non-compliance with the provisions of special leave with pay (including the requirement to provide bona fide⁷ confirmation of self-isolation/ /diagnosis/restricting your movements for COVID-19) existing procedures, including disciplinary measures may be invoked.

⁶ If your manager is not available, please contact another manager in your area or your HR team. In rare situations where that is not possible, make a note of the date and times of call made and continue to try to contact your managers until contact is made.

⁷ Bona fide in relation to a representation or communication means in good faith and well founded in fact. The employer reserves the right to request further confirmation.

Appendix 5: Guidance for managers when notified of COVID-19 self-isolation or restricted movement

1. If a manager receives a call from an employee advising that they may need to self-isolate/restrict their movements, the manager should in the first instance ask if the person has to restrict their movements as a precaution and if they are well enough to work. If they are well enough to work they should be asked to work from home.
2. If the employee has been notified to self-isolate and is not well enough to work, the manager should ask the employee the questions below. The manager should take note of the details provided. The arrangements for the recording of this will vary based on each organisation's payroll/HR facilities.
3. Questions:
 - a. Date of commencement and number of days advised to self-isolate
 - b. Advice received from:
 - GP
 - HSE
 - Hospital
 - Other (you will be required to specify what that is)
4. Managers should make employees aware of the need to stay in regular contact and advise them of any employee assistance programmes available to them.
5. Managers should alert the employee to any follow up actions that are required on their return to work (for example, self-declarations).

Appendix 6 – Example self-declaration form

SAMPLE COVID-19 SELF DECLARATION SPECIAL LEAVE WITH PAY

Employee Details

First name	
Surname	
Grade	
Department	
Business Unit	

Dates of Special Leave with Pay for COVID-19 related self-isolation

Number of days advised to self-isolate	
Commencing on (DD/MM/YYYY)	
Ending on (DD/MM/YYYY)	

Advised to self-isolate by (✓)

GP	<input type="checkbox"/>	HSE	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hospital	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Advice received via (✓)

Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Letter/email/text (please attach copy to this form)	<input type="checkbox"/>
In person	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Details of Advice to Self-Isolate

Name of adviser (e.g. name of GP, HSE worker)	
Date and time advice given	
Details provided to the adviser by you (e.g. places and dates of exposure etc.)	

Declaration for Special Leave Pay

I confirm I have read and understand the provisions of Special Leave with Pay as set out in Part IX of Circular 02/1976	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that in the event of non-compliance with the provisions of special leave with pay (including the requirement to provide bona fide ⁸ confirmation of self-isolation/diagnosis of COVID-19) existing procedures, including disciplinary measures may be invoked.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that any overpayment of salary which may arise from non-compliance with the provisions of special leave with pay will be repaid.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have attached relevant documentation (where applicable)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee signature		
Date		

Manager Approval

Manager signature	
-------------------	--

⁸ Bona fide in relation to a representation or communication means in good faith and well founded in fact. The employer reserves the right to request further confirmation.

Date	
------	--

Data Protection

The data requested in this form will be used to process your application for Special Leave with Pay (COVID-19 related) and will be retained as part of your personnel record for the appropriate period of time. The employer will treat all information and personal data you give according to the law.



**An Roinn Caiteachais
Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe**
Department of Public
Expenditure and Reform

**Tithe an Rialtas. Sráid Mhuirfean Uacht,
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Please note FAQs will continue to evolve and will be updated as developments change. Guidance for staff at home and abroad on core operational and HR matters can be found below. If your query or concern is not addressed here please email CSDCovidqueries@dfa.ie

If you are self-isolating because you have been exposed to a known risk, have symptoms or are waiting for a Covid-19 test, please let HR know by sending an email to HR-COVIDResponse@dfa.ie. This is a confidential email, which is monitored by the HR Management team only. Managers, who are contacted by an affected team member, are asked to use this email address to report potential cases and to seek advice.

Colleagues can also use this email to disclose an underlying health condition or any other health or welfare related concern. Colleagues are asked to follow the advice of the HSE/your GP. Any staff member who is feeling unwell should not attend the office.

FAQS FOR DFAT STAFF - June 2020

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1. What is the current Government Guidance?

Ireland is now in Phase 2 of the Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business. The message is to stay local - either within your county, or within 20 kilometres of home.

COVID-19 is still having a major impact on our country. By working together we have made progress – but the virus is still in Ireland. As we reopen our country, it is vital that we all continue to observe the public health guidance. To stay safe, you need to limit where you go and limit the number of people you meet.

Here are five things you should know for Phase 2:

- **Stay Local:** You may travel within your own county, or up to 20 kilometres from your home if crossing county boundaries.
- **Meeting other people:** You may meet up to 6 people from outside your household both indoors and outdoors for social gatherings. Organised outdoor exercise, sporting, cultural or social activities of up to 15 people may take place.
- **Shops:** All retail is reopening. Shop locally, shop safely and support businesses in your community.
- **Work from home:** It is more important than ever to work from home where possible.
- **Transport:** Walk or cycle if you can. Only use public transport if you absolutely need to. Public transport capacity is limited because of social distancing requirements.

Read the full Phase 2 guidance [here](#).

Continue to follow the HSE health guidance [here](#).

2. What does this mean for our Department?

This is a global public health emergency, for which there is no precedent and which has required a shared national effort in response. The priorities of DFAT Management remain the health and wellbeing of all our staff; to ensure our critical business functions are serviced including any necessary front line services; and to assist with the national effort where required.

The [Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business](#) published on 1 May 2020 sets out how the COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted. It should be noted that remote working continues throughout the five phases and beyond, for all employees who can do so. Public Service employees in Ireland will continue to stay at home, unless they need to attend the workplace for an essential service, that cannot be done from home. Recovery of society and the economy is a priority for the public service. The civil and public service must show leadership and support for those members of society who need to attend the workplace outside the home by enabling as many of their own employees to continue to work from home for as long as possible.

The most recently published [FAQs by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform](#) set out this approach in more detail in addition to other questions around the operation of flexi-time, temporary assignments, leave and special leave, and absence due to Covid-19 related illness.

Many of our **missions** are at different stages in their Covid-19 response, and for many, it remains the case that most staff will be working remotely for the foreseeable future and until such time as it is deemed safe to do otherwise. Other missions though, through risk assessment and in line with local

regulations and public health guidance will have already begun to return more staff to the workplace or are in advanced stages of planning. **Specific guidance for all Heads of Mission “[Guidance on Planning a Safe Return to the Workplace](#)” issued on 25 May 2020.**

3. Should I continue to work from home? Can I bring my team back into HQ buildings?

As set out above, the [Government’s Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business](#) published on 1 May 2020 sets out how the COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted. Remote working continues throughout the five phases, and beyond, for all employees who can do so. Public Service employees in Ireland will continue to stay at home, unless they need to attend the workplace for an essential service, that cannot be done from home. Recovery of society and the economy is a priority for the public service. The civil and public service must show leadership and support for those members of society who need to attend the workplace outside the home by enabling as many of their own employees to continue to work from home for as long as possible. **This guidance should inform all business units at HQ.**

4. Can I take my equipment from the office to facilitate home working?

- **Removing ICT Equipment from DFAT Premises**

In order to keep our offices equipped for our return to the workplace, the Head of ICT recommends that no ICT equipment be removed by officers. **Where colleagues feel they have an exceptional requirement to retrieve peripheral ICT equipment for home working, guidance issued by ICT Unit on the [Relocation of ICT Peripherals](#) must be adhered to.**

- **Removing furniture/equipment from DFAT premises**

We recognise that for many current working-from-home arrangements are far from ideal. **Nevertheless, *inter alia* for health and safety reasons, Property Management Unit’s preference is that colleagues avoid bringing office furniture or equipment home, or do so to the minimum possible extent.** We accept that in some cases a staff member may have need of an office chair or footrest. In such cases, the items may be removed by the officer, if specifically approved by PMU, on the terms and conditions set out in the following [e-mail template](#). The fully completed email template must be sent to propertymanagement@dfa.ie.

- **Removing Hard Copy Files from DFAT premises**

No hard copy files should be removed from our premises.

Missions should closely follow the [“Guidance on Planning a Safe Return to the Workplace”](#) issued by Corporate Services Division this week including completing the [‘Covid-19 Safe Workplace Planning Checklist’](#).

5. What is the guidance on working arrangements including leave, pay etc. during this period?

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (D/PER) continues to regularly update their detailed FAQs. The most [recent version](#), published on 22 May 2020, contained the following new and updated questions:

1. UPDATED 1.1 Who should attend the workplace?

2. UPDATED 1.2 Should employees who are at high risk for serious illness from COVID-19 attend the workplace?
3. UPDATED 1.3 What to do if an employee is identified as being at very high risk (extremely vulnerable) and is advised to cocoon?
4. UPDATED 3.1 How is the continuity of essential public services and attendance at the workplace being managed across the public service?
5. NEW 5.3 How should annual leave be taken during COVID-19?
6. NEW 5.8 How should employers treat requests for a working from home allowance?
7. NEW Section 6: How should public service employers implement the 'Return to Work Safely Protocol'?
8. NEW 6.1 When should employers ask employees to return to the physical workplace?
9. NEW 6.2 What measures do employers need to take?
10. UPDATED Appendix 2: Guidance for Public Service employees in the instance that they become unwell in the workplace showing symptoms of COVID-19
11. UPDATED Appendix 3: Guidance for managers in the instance that an employee becomes unwell in the workplace showing symptoms of COVID-19

6. What is the guidance for Posted Officers on self-isolation requirements in advance of or after taking leave?

Posted officers who are taking annual leave and are required to self-isolate in advance or after taking leave or both, should continue to work remotely during the self-isolation period. In a small number of cases where officers are not set up technically to remote work, they should remain available to work and managers should look to identify and provide work to them. This is a standard approach across the Public Sector.

If the officer has challenges in performing their current role remotely, the individual is still to be considered as on duty and available to work. Managers need to be flexible and innovative in terms of ensuring that their officers remain as productive as possible during this time.

Any further questions regarding leave entitlements can be forwarded to hrhqhelpdesk@dfa.ie.

7. What should I do if I have been exposed to Covid-19?

If you think you have been exposed to Covid-19 or feel unwell, please contact your line manager immediately who will contact HR.

If you develop symptoms as outlined by the HSE you will need to self-isolate and phone your GP. The people in your household need to restrict their movements. Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. The GP will assess you over the phone. If they think you need to be tested for coronavirus, they will arrange a test.

Officers in **missions** abroad should self-isolate if experiencing symptoms and follow the health advice of local authorities / health providers as appropriate.

8. Will temporary assignments / redeployments continue?

As you are aware, over the last two months, HR has worked with Divisions and Units to ensure that essential work could continue and was resourced appropriately. This led to significant additional staff being reassigned on a temporary basis to Consular Division. HR very much appreciates the

enthusiasm shown by colleagues in responding to a number of calls for volunteers to join Consular Division, the Crisis Response Call Centre and CEMS, as well as the flexibility and generosity of managers in releasing colleagues, often for extended periods. The Passport Office has played a key role in supporting the Crisis Response Call Centre, and staff from that office have also been temporarily redeployed to support the HSE and D/EASP in critical work.

While many business units may now be working towards returning to business as usual, staffing of essential roles is still required and colleagues and business units are asked to remain flexible in the period ahead so that we can continue to best support the national effort and our own DFAT resourcing needs.

9. What is the advice for attending or hosting meeting/events of any size?

This is a public health emergency and we have a responsibility to follow closely Government guidance. The Department is adhering to Phase 1 of the Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business.

All meetings and events should continue to be conducted by VC rather than in-person.

Those staff who **must** be in the office must adhere to strict [Social Distancing Guidelines](#).

10. What health and safety and other arrangements are being put in place for staff eventually returning to the office and those essential staff currently in the office?

A **HQ Covid-19 Safe Working Group** was established following the publication of the Government's roadmap on 1 May. The Working Group is composed of colleagues from across Corporate Services Division and the Passport Office. Guided by the Government's [Return to Workplace Safely Protocol](#) and [HSA guidance](#), the Working Group is developing the necessary guidance material and implementing the necessary adaptation of our HQ buildings to accommodate and support the safe and gradual return of DFAT staff to the workplace, as and when appropriate. The Working Group will also continue to liaise closely with missions to ensure consistent approaches and the safeguarding our posted staff and their dependants abroad. The Working Group will also consider the ergonomic arrangements of HQ officers who will continue to work from home over the coming months in addition to any relevant policies relating to our future ways of working.

It should be noted, however, that as outlined above, remote working continues throughout the five stages, and beyond, of the Government Roadmap for all employees who can do so. Only those workers who are required to physically attend the workplace should do so. Any decisions to re-open a workplace shall be done in compliance with Government and public health advice.

Whilst the Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business outlines a time period for the five phases, it also notes that the phases are not necessarily linear in their trajectory. The civil and public service needs to ensure that we have the potential to increase and decrease measures in response to the changes that may need to be made to the Roadmap based on public health advice. This in turn means that the public service needs to be as productive as possible in the new ways of working. This is to ensure that we, as a public service, are resilient against any future waves of COVID-19 and that we have a blueprint for the future and any new pandemics.

The overarching principle at all times for the HQ Covid-19 Safe Working Group will be the protection of the health and safety of staff and others and taking all reasonable steps to eliminate/minimise risk.

11. What is the guidance for staff on travel?

The Government guidance remains that all non-essential overseas travel should continue to be avoided. Any request for official travel must be signed off by a Head of Division.

Where essential travel is undertaken, all travellers to Ireland are required to self-isolate for 14 days after arrival. There is no exemption for civil or public servants serving abroad. HSE guidance on self-isolation is available [here](#).

All those arriving in Ireland must comply with a mandatory requirement to complete a Passenger Locator Form with penalties for non-compliance. The following passengers arriving from outside of Ireland are not required to complete this form:

- Passengers arriving from Northern Ireland;
- Passengers leaving the State from their port or airport of arrival without otherwise exiting the port or airport;
- Holders of a Certificate for International Transport Workers, or drivers of a heavy goods vehicle, who are in the State in the course of performing their duties;
- Aircraft crew, including the pilot, who are in the State in the course of performing their duties;
- Ship crew, including the maritime master, who are in the State in the course of performing their duties;
- Foreign diplomats

Passengers who are leaving the port or airport but will not be residing in the State overnight because they are travelling on to Northern Ireland or overseas, do not need to provide further contact information.

12. Some of my staff are still without access to the DFAT network. Can ICT provide Single Devices for local staff in missions/staff at HQ currently not assigned single devices?

The global rollout of single devices to HQ based staff was completed in 2019. Local staff in missions were not due to receive these devices. It is unfortunately not possible at this time to provide single devices to local staff in missions.

However, the ICT Unit has implemented temporary network access for over 160 local staff based on Citrix technology on non-departmental laptops and PCs. This arrangement covers a small number of staff per mission and is nearing full capacity. Missions which have not availed and would like to should contact ICT Unit.

At HQ the ICT Unit is working with business units to identify gaps in remote access.

13. What wellbeing supports are available to staff during this time?

We understand that this is a worrying time for all colleagues and want to remind you of the following supports that may be of assistance.

Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS)

The Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS) remains available to HQ and posted staff for phone consultations and has provided a helpful [Advice Sheet](#) on managing anxiety. The operational hours of the CSEAS have been expanded with officers on duties between 9am – 8pm every weekday and from 12pm – 4pm on Saturdays and Sundays. The following direct contacts within the CSEAS may be helpful to staff:

- Ann Duffy Department’s Employee Assistance Officer supporting officers based in Dublin and posted abroad: Tel: 0761 000 024. Mobile: 086 7852751. Email: ann.duffy@per.gov.ie
- Philip O’Callaghan Employee Assistance Officer for staff based in Cork: Tel: 021-4535297. Mobile: 086 8384359.
- Geraldine Carey Employee Assistance Officer for staff based in Limerick: Tel: 061 212261, Mobile: 0872425136, Email: Geraldine.carey@per.gov.ie
- The central CSEAS phone line is also operational as normal: 0761 000030 www.cseas.per.gov.ie
- HSE Guidance on [Minding your Mental Health](#) during Covid-19

Workplace Options

[Workplace Options](#) is also our 24/7 global confidential welfare advice and support service for all of our posted staff and their accompanying family members. It can be accessed by Freephone, web and text message. The service is free of charge and is available to accompanying dependants. Colleagues can make a request online using the company code DFAT on the site:

<https://ear.powerflexweb.com/1006/loginGlobal.html>

International SOS

All officers at HQ and abroad, family members accompanying officers on post, and local staff at our missions abroad also have access to the services of **International SOS**, a world-leader in medical and travel security services. Services are provided on a 24/7 basis via 27 assistance centres across the world. Colleagues can access the [International SOS Members’ website](#) using the DFAT Corporate Comprehensive Membership Access Code 14ACMA000090. This code may also be used when calling an assistance centre for bespoke medical advice.

In This Together Government Resources

The Government’s [In This Together](#) campaign has advice and tips on how you can look after your **mental wellbeing, stay active** and **stay connected**. In This Together draws together a range of activities that you can pursue in your home or your locality, by yourself or with family members or with friends online. There are ideas and activities for people of all ages.

Wellbeing at Work

Please also visit our [Wellbeing at Work](#) Covid-19 Wellbeing Resource page and please contact the team with any ideas you might have on useful wellbeing initiatives or resources at this time.

Corporate Services Division

June 2020



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

ANNEX B



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Return to Work Safely Protocol

COVID-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers

Prepared by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and
the Department of Health

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A. Introduction

1. Context

We are all confronted with a situation that was unimaginable a few short weeks ago. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted severely on every part of our society and our economy. In the face of this, the biggest challenge we have encountered in decades, Irish people have almost universally stepped up to the plate and adhered to the strict guidelines put in place by the Government, following the advice of the National Public Health Emergency Response Team (NPHE).

Because of this strict adherence to the rules, we have all contributed to the progress that Ireland has made in containing the spread of COVID-19 and, in so doing, we have saved lives. Now, because of the progress made, we are beginning to move to the next phase in reducing the spread of the virus, while starting to gradually re-open our economy and our society. In doing so, we still need to make sure that we adhere to the rules of the new way of living and working, so that we maintain the gains we have made, and continue to suppress the spread of the virus. Work is a key part of life and most of us want to return to our jobs as soon as possible. But we need to get back to work safely.

The attached **Return to Work Safely Protocol**, is the result of a collaborative effort by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the Health Services Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health. It is designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, when the economy begins to slowly open up, following the temporary closure of most businesses during the worst phase of the current pandemic.

The protocol was developed following discussion and agreement at the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF), which is the forum for high level dialogue between Government, Trade Union and Employer representatives on matters of strategic national importance. The work has been overseen by the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation.

The protocol incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE). As the advice issued by NPHE continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures employers and workers need to address may also change. Therefore, it should be noted that the attached details are non-exhaustive and are also subject to change. This Protocol is a general document applicable to all industry sectors. It is not designed to prohibit the introduction of further specific measures in particular sectors or workplaces, as long as they enhance the measures set out in the Protocol. In addition, further supports for employers and workers will be developed and provided where appropriate. This is a living document.

2. Working together to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between employers and workers is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. It is also essential to achieve success and maximum buy-in. Employers and workers will have regular engagement about COVID-19 and preventative measures in the workplace. Information and guidance should be provided by employers to workers, which should include the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, how it spreads, cleaning routines and waste disposal as well as advice on hand and respiratory hygiene, physical distancing, use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and work equipment where relevant.

Adherence to this protocol will only be achieved if employers and workers have a shared responsibility to implement the measures contained in this protocol in their place of work. A collaborative approach to the implementation of the protocol is essential to achieve success and maximum buy-in. Each workplace will appoint at least one lead worker representative charged with ensuring that COVID-19 measures are strictly adhered to in their place of work. The person(s) undertaking the role must receive the necessary training and have a structured framework to follow within the organisation to be effective in preventing the spread of the virus. Employers will have regular and meaningful engagement with their worker representative, workers and/or their recognised Trade Union or other representatives (including their Health and Safety Committee where this exists) about the measures being put in place to address

the occupational exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. Employers will provide a COVID-19 induction training for all workers. The number of worker representatives for COVID-19 appointed will, ideally, be proportionate to the number of workers in the workplace and this person should be clearly identifiable in the workplace. Employers and worker representatives will work together to ensure that all the actions in this protocol are fully adhered to in order to ensure the suppression of COVID-19 in the workplace.

3. Overseeing and responding to a rapidly moving challenge

Over the following weeks, as the economy begins to open up in a way that ensures a safe return for workers and their families, this protocol may be supplemented by further guidance. As stated above, the challenge that we face is rapidly changing, and we need to be able to quickly respond to those changes. We also need to monitor how businesses are coping with the new way of working and whether changes need to be made to elements of this protocol.

In order to oversee this transition, a high-level consultative stakeholder forum, under the aegis of LEEF, will be established. This forum will include membership from the various bodies with responsibility for health and safety at work and for public health more generally. The forum will allow for ongoing engagement at national level on implementation issues in light of evolving public health advice and other factors.

Note that this Protocol is not intended to replace the existing measures that essential businesses, which have continued to operate, have already implemented. However, such businesses should review their existing measures to ensure they are in line with this Protocol.

B. Protocol for Employers and Workers Regarding the Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace

This non-exhaustive document describes the steps that employers and workers shall take in order to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. It also provides advice on the measures recommended by Government to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community. Employers and workers should however keep up to date with the latest measures introduced by Government and any advice issued as a result. For more general matters related to occupational health and safety (OSH) requirements, please refer to the relevant legislation, guidance and advice available on the Health and Safety Authority: www.hsa.ie.

C. Employer-Worker Engagement, Communication and Training

The key to a safe and continued return to work requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between employers and workers.

Workplace controls to comply with infection prevention measures included in this protocol should be communicated and explained to all relevant workers and others (visitors, contractors) at the place of work. As noted above, an employer will appoint at least one lead worker representative whose role is to work collaboratively with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures and monitor adherence to the measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19. The number of representatives appointed will, ideally, be proportionate to the number of workers in the workplace and these key personnel will be clearly identifiable in the workplace. Every workplace will however, have at least one worker representative in place to address these COVID-19 requirements. The worker representative should, together with the COVID-19 response management team, support the implementation of the measures identified in this national protocol. Such a person or persons should be clearly identifiable in the workplace and receive the relevant and necessary training by their employer.

Employers will also communicate with safety representatives selected or appointed under the Occupational Health and Safety legislation and consult with workers on safety measures to be implemented in the workplace. The employer should use the appointed occupational safety and health officer or an external competent person to ensure the effective implementation of changes to work activities and the implementation of infection prevention and control measures in the workplace at the place of work. For further information on the role of Safety Representative visit this [link](#).

D. Background

The outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has evolved rapidly and the Department of Health is leading the Government response in Ireland to this national public health emergency and it, along with the Health Service Executive's (HSE) Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HSPC), is providing up to date information and advice on its website.

The advice and guidance for Ireland takes account of guidance from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organization, and decisions of the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE). An Expert Advisory Group (EAG), which includes experts in Public Health Medicine, Infectious Diseases, Infection Prevention and Control and Virology, has also been established which provides expert scientific advice relating to the novel coronavirus and advises NPHE.

Exposure to COVID-19 is a public health risk which affects all citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic also has implications for all workplaces as it can present a health risk to workers and other persons at a place of work. The reopening of the economy goes hand-in-hand with the provision of public health measures to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 as well as the existing occupational safety and health measures. Managing the risk of spread in the workplace is important in relation to the health of workers but is also important as part of general efforts to control the spread and protect the most vulnerable.

The following protocol describes the measures required to be put in place by employers and adhered to by workers to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

Symptoms of COVID-19

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take anything from 2 days up to 14 days for symptoms of coronavirus to appear. They can be similar to the symptoms of cold and flu.

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE [Website](#).

Some people infected with the virus, so called asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all.

How COVID-19 Spreads

The virus that causes COVID-19 disease is spread from people in fluid and in droplets scattered from the nose or mouth of an infected person when the person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or speaks. The fluid or droplets land on objects and surfaces around the infected person. Other people contaminate their hands by touching these objects or surfaces and then bring the virus into contact with their eyes, nose or mouth by touching them with their contaminated hands. COVID-19 can also spread if droplets from an infected person land directly on the mucous membranes of the eye, nose or mouth of a person standing close to them.

It is still not known how long the virus survives on surfaces in different conditions. The period of survival may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment). Studies indicate that it can persist on surfaces for hours and up to several days in the absence of effective cleaning. Thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces is essential. If disinfection is required it must be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning.

While people are most likely to pass on the infection when they have symptoms, current information suggests that some infected people spread the virus to others prior to developing or displaying symptoms themselves.

E. Getting Back to Work – Steps for Employers and Workers to Reduce Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in the Workplace

Any decisions to re-open a workplace shall be done in compliance with the Government and public health advice.

In this regard, employers, in consultation with the nominated worker representative(s), must take the following steps:

1. Develop and/or Update the COVID-19 Response Plan

In advance of returning to work, **employers will:**

- develop and/or update a business COVID-19 Response Plan.
- update their occupational health and safety risk assessments and safety statement.
- address the level(s) of risk associated with various workplaces and work activities in the COVID-19 business plans and OSH risk assessments. For example, where, how and to what sources of COVID-19 might workers be exposed, including the general public, customers, co-workers etc.
- take into account worker's individual risk factors (e.g. older workers, presence of underlying medical conditions, etc.).
- include in the plan a response plan to deal with a suspected case of COVID-19.
- include the controls necessary to address the risks identified.
- include contingency measures to address increased rates of worker absenteeism, implementation of the measures necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19, changing work patterns, etc.
- develop plans in consultation with workers and communicate once finalised.

2. Develop or amend policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers who may have symptoms of COVID-19, as appropriate

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in protecting the worker involved, their colleagues, customers or others at the workplace.

Employers will:

- keep a log of contact/group work to facilitate contact tracing.
- inform workers and others of the purpose of the log.
- display information on signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- provide up to date information on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie.
- provide instruction for workers to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during work.

Workers will:

- make themselves aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any signs or symptoms.
- report to managers immediately if any symptoms develop during the shift.

3. Develop, Consult, Communicate and Implement Workplace Changes or Policies

Employers should:

- review and revise existing sick leave policies and amend as appropriate and in line with normal procedures. In so doing, employers will consult with and communicate to workers, in line with normal procedures, any changes that are introduced to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

- ensure the occupational health service, if provided, is available to address any worker concerns and communicate the messages about good hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing. A business's occupational health service should also provide training and advice on the measures recommended to reduce the spread as well as dealing with any anxieties or concerns workers may have about COVID-19.
- make available the necessary public health advice from the HSE and other sources as appropriate to their workers where there is no occupational health service available in a workplace. The lead worker representative(s) appointed (see above) should be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.
- agree through negotiation with workers/Trade Unions any temporary restructuring of work patterns that may be required to implement the COVID-19 prevention measures in the workplace. In so doing, any existing sectoral agreements must be taken into account.

As information about the virus is evolving, public health advice is being updated on a regular basis, and it is important for employers and workers to recognise that flexibility will be required on the part of employers and workers in meeting the measures to reduce the spread.

4. Implementing the COVID-19 Prevention and Control Measures to Minimise risk to Workers

Before returning to work, the following pre-return to work steps should be put in place and completed by both employers and workers.

Employers must:

- establish and issue a pre-return to work form for workers to complete at least 3 days in advance of the return to work. This form should seek confirmation that the worker, to the best of their knowledge, has no symptoms of COVID-19 and also confirm that the worker is not self-isolating or awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test.
- include the following questions on the form. If a worker answers Yes to any of them, they are strongly advised to follow the medical advice they receive or seek medical advice before returning to work:

- Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days? Yes/No,
- Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days? Yes/No,
- Are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (i.e. less than 2m for more than 15 minutes accumulative in 1 day)? Yes/No,
- Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time? Yes/No,
- Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time? Yes/No.
- provide an induction training for all workers. This training should at a minimum include the latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health: what a worker should do if they develop symptoms of COVID-19; details of how the workplace is organised to address the risk from COVID-19; an outline of the COVID-19 response plan; identification of points of contact from the employer and the workers; and any other sector specific advice that is relevant.
- arrange for the putting in place of the necessary controls identified in the risk assessment to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.
- implement temperature testing in line with Public Health advice.

To assist with the return to work, employers can find details of existing supports and resources in place for businesses impacted by COVID-19 at:

<https://dbe.gov.ie/en/Publications/Supports-for-businesses-COVID-19.html>.

Workers must:

- complete and return the pre-return to work form before they return to work.
- inform their employer if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to allow their safe return to work.
- self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they have any COVID-19 symptoms.
- stay out of work until all symptoms have cleared following self-isolation.
- participate in any induction training provided by the employer on their return to the workplace.

- complete any temperature testing as implemented by the employer and in line with Public Health advice.

Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 in the Workplace

While a worker should not attend work if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, the following steps outline how employers should put in place a response plan in advance and also deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

Employers must:

- include a defined response structure that identifies the team(s) responsible for responding to a suspected case in the COVID-19 response plan.
- appoint an appropriate manager(s) for dealing with suspected cases.
- identify a designated isolation area in advance. The designated area and the route to the designated area should be easily accessible and as far as is reasonable and practicable should be accessible by people with disabilities.
- take into account the possibility of one or more persons displaying the signs of COVID-19 and have additional isolation areas available or another contingency plan for dealing with same.
- ensure the designated area has the ability to isolate the person behind a closed door. Where a closed door area is not possible, the employer must provide for an area away from other workers.
- provide as is reasonably practicable:
 - Ventilation, i.e. via a window,
 - Tissues, hand sanitiser, disinfectant and/or wipes,
 - PPE; gloves, masks,
 - Clinical waste bags.

If a worker displays symptoms of COVID-19 during work, the manager and the response team must:

- isolate the worker and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from

the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times.

- provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. The worker should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
- assess whether the unwell individual can immediately be directed to go home and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
- facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The worker should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
- arrange transport home or to hospital for medical assessment. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
- carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
- arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.
- provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSE.

Additional advice on dealing with a suspected case is available from the NSAI:

<https://www.n Sai.ie/images/uploads/general/NSAI-Guidelines-for-COVID-19-2020-04-09.pdf>

The best way to prevent person-to-person spread of COVID-19 is to use proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette and practice physical distancing.

4A. HAND HYGIENE

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19.

Employers must:

- ensure that appropriate hygiene facilities are in place to accommodate workers adhering to hand hygiene measures.
- make available advice and training on how to perform hand hygiene effectively:

(<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>).

- display posters on how to wash hands in appropriate locations: (<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/hand-hygiene-poster-english.pdf>).

Workers must:

- ensure they are familiar with and follow hand hygiene guidance and advice.
- wash their hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand rub regularly and in particular:
 - after coughing and sneezing,
 - before and after eating,
 - before and after preparing food,
 - if in contact with someone who is displaying any COVID-19 symptoms,
 - before and after being on public transport (if using it),
 - before and after being in a crowd,
 - when arriving and leaving the workplace/other sites,
 - before having a cigarette or vaping,
 - when hands are dirty,
 - after toilet use.
- avoid touching their eyes, mouth, or nose.
- have access to facilities to support hand hygiene (for example hand sanitiser/hand wipes/hand washing facilities).
- not share objects that touch their mouth, for example, bottles or cups.
- use own pens for signing in.

4B. RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

In addition to hand hygiene, good respiratory hygiene and etiquette is also necessary.

Employers must:

- provide tissues as well as bins/bags for their disposal.
- empty bins at regular intervals.
- provide advice on good respiratory practice.

Workers must:

- adopt good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.
- ensure they are familiar with and follow respiratory hygiene guidance.

4C. PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection. The current recommended distance to be maintained between people to minimise risk of transmission is 2 metres.

Employers must:

- provide for physical distancing across all work activities and this may be achieved in a number of ways:
 - implement a no hand shaking policy,
 - where office work is essential, free office capacity must be used as much as is reasonably practicable and work organised in such a way that multiple occupancy of office premises is avoided and/or physical distances maintained,
 - organise workers into teams who consistently work and take breaks together. The teams should be as small as is reasonably practicable in the context of the work to be done,
 - organise breaks in such a way as to facilitate maintenance of physical distancing during breaks,
 - reorganise and rearrange working and break areas. For example, placing tables and chairs far enough apart in canteens,
 - consider closing canteen facilities if public health measures including social distancing cannot be facilitated. If closing, provide information on delivery options,
 - stagger canteen use and extend serving times,
 - implement a queue management system with correct distance markings to avoid queues at food counters, tray return points and checkouts,
 - put in place use of card payment methods where practicable,
 - allocate specific times for collections, appointments and deliverables,

- conduct meetings as much as possible using online remote means. Where face to face meetings are absolutely necessary, the length of the meeting and the numbers attending should be kept to a minimum and participants must maintain physical distancing at all times,
- provide one way systems for access/egress routes in the workplace where practicable,
- adapt existing sign-in/sign-out measures and systems, for example, biometrics/turnstiles, to ensure that physical distancing can be maintained,
- ensure that workers sharing collective accommodation at a place of work are grouped in fixed teams that are as small as is reasonably practicable and consist of individuals who also work together. As far as is reasonably practicable,
 - each team should where reasonably practicable be provided with their own communal facilities (washrooms, kitchens and communal rooms) in order to avoid the additional burden of shift-wise use and the necessity to clean between occupancy by different teams. If this is not possible, employers should implement phased use and an enhanced cleaning regime.
 - accommodation must be regularly cleaned and ventilated either manually (by opening windows and doors) or mechanically.
 - sleeping accommodation should normally be occupied singly.
 - additional rooms must be provided for early isolation of infected persons.
- prevent gatherings of workers in the workplace at the beginning and end of working hours (such as at time recording terminals and in changing rooms, washrooms and showers),
- implement physical distancing during any outdoor work activity. For outdoor work activities, facilities for frequent hand hygiene should be provided and should be located close to where workers are working.

In settings where 2 metre worker separation cannot be ensured by organisational means, alternative protective measures should be put in place, for example:

- Install physical barriers, such as clear plastic sneeze guards between workers,
- Maintain at least a distance of 1 metre or as much distance as is reasonably practicable,

- Minimise any direct worker contact and provide hand washing facilities, and other hand hygiene aids, such as hand sanitisers, wipes etc. that are readily accessible so workers can perform hand hygiene as soon as the work task is complete,
- Make face masks available to the worker in line with Public Health advice.

Note: wearing of masks is not a substitute for other measures outlined above. However, if masks are worn they should be clean and they should not be shared or handled by other colleagues. Employers and workers should keep up to date with the latest Public Health advice issued in regard to masks by Gov.ie/NPHET.

At Risk/Vulnerable Workers:

If an at risk or vulnerable worker cannot work from home and must be in the workplace, employers must make sure that they are preferentially supported to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres. However, employers should enable vulnerable workers to work from home where possible.

Working from home:

Office work should continue to be carried out at home, where practicable and non-essential work. The employer should develop and consult on any working from home policy in conjunction with workers and/or Trade Unions. Advice on working from home on a temporary basis is available from the Health and Safety Authority ([link](#)).

Business Travel and Contractors/Visitors:

- Business trips and face-to-face interactions should be reduced to the absolute minimum and, as far as is reasonably practicable, technological alternatives should be made available (e.g., telephone or video conferencing).
- For necessary work-related trips, the use of the same vehicles by multiple workers is not encouraged. The number of workers who share a vehicle – simultaneously or consecutively – should be kept to a minimum as far as is as reasonably practicable, for example by assigning a vehicle to a fixed team.

- Workers should be encouraged to travel alone if using their personal cars for work or at a maximum be accompanied by one passenger who shall be seated in adherence with physical distancing guidance.
- Workers should be provided with hand sanitisers and cleaning equipment for their work vehicle.
- Workers, contractors or visitors visiting workplaces where there are restrictions arising from the risk of COVID-19 should follow the site infection prevention and control measures and take into account public health advice around preventing the spread of COVID-19. A system for recording visits to the site(s) by workers/others as well as visits by workers to other workplaces should be put in place by employers and completed by workers as required.
- provide induction training for contractors and visitors to the workplace.

Cleaning:

Cleaning of work areas must be conducted at regular intervals. Further information on cleaning in non-healthcare settings is available from the ECDC at:

https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Environmental-persistence-of-SARS_CoV_2-virus-Options-for-cleaning2020-03-26_0.pdf

Employers must:

- implement thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. If disinfection of an area is required it must be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning.
- ensure contact/touch surfaces such as table tops, work equipment, door handles and handrails are visibly clean at all times and are cleaned at least twice daily.
- implement modified cleaning intervals for rooms and work areas. This applies especially for washroom facilities and communal spaces. Cleaning should be performed at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.
- provide workers with essential cleaning materials to keep their own workspace clean (for example wipes/disinfection products, paper towels and waste bins/bags).
- increase number of waste collection points and ensure these are emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.

- modify use of hot desks to ensure that these are made available to identified staff and have appropriate cleaning materials in place for workers to clean the area before using.

Use of PPE – Personal Protective Equipment

While correctly using PPE can help prevent some exposures, it should not take the place of other preventative measures as outlined above. Examples of PPE include gloves, goggles, respiratory protection. Use of PPE may already be required in many workplaces to address occupational health and safety risks, for example, exposure to hazardous chemicals such as asbestos. In the context of COVID-19 risk, employers should check the HPSC website regularly for updates regarding use of recommended PPE.

- Full hygiene compliance as set out above should be applied and maintained in all circumstances.
 - PPE must be selected based on the hazard to the worker.
 - Employers must provide PPE and protective clothing to workers in accordance with identified COVID-19 exposure risks and in line with Public Health Advice.
 - Workers should be trained in the proper use, cleaning, storing and disposal of PPE.
 - Gloves are generally not required for infection prevention and control purposes. Where gloves are necessary, they must not be considered a substitute for hand hygiene and hands must be cleaned whenever gloves are removed. Gloves should not create an additional occupational hazard (such as of gloves getting caught in rotating parts). Limitations on wearing time and workers' individual susceptibilities (allergies, etc.) must also be taken into account.
 - For particular PPE, such as respirators, these must be properly fitted and periodically refitted, as appropriate.
 - PPE needs to be consistently and properly worn when required. In addition, it must be regularly inspected, cleaned, maintained and replaced as necessary.

- Further information on PPE is available at:
https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Personal_Protective_Equipment_-_PPE/.
- Advice for manufacturers and importers who wish to introduce PPE onto the market in response to the current COVID-19 emergency is available on the HSA [website](#).

Note: Face Shields designed and authorised as PPE against respiratory droplets should not be mistaken or used as a substitute for impact protection PPE in the workplace. For example, where standard CE marked Face Visor/Face protection PPE is required for work activities such as welding, grinding or to protect against chemical splashes.

5. Worker Role

Workers should follow the public health advice and guidance, as well as any specific direction from the employer. They should also adopt good hygiene practices, such as frequent hand washing, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing to protect themselves and their work colleagues against infection and should seek professional healthcare advice if unwell. If a worker has any symptoms of COVID-19, they should not attend work. Workers should also avoid making contact with their face and in particular their eyes, nose and mouth. Where necessary, workers should wash their hands immediately before touching their face.

As noted above, the key to effective implementation of the infection prevention and control measures as well as occupational health and safety measures in the workplace is having a strong communication and shared collaborative approach between employers and workers.

6. Customer Facing Roles

Many of the measures noted above for workers can and should equally be applied for work activity that involves direct customer or visitor contacts.

Employers must:

- eliminate physical interaction between workers and customers as much as is reasonably practicable through revised working arrangements. For example through provision of online or phone orders, contactless delivery or managed entry.
- provide hand sanitisers at entry/exit points.
- install physical barriers and clear markings to ensure that contact between workers and customers is kept to a minimum and to ensure that queues do not form between customers as they wait to be served.
- implement a cleaning regime to ensure that contact points for workers and customers are kept visibly cleaned at all times.
- display the advice on the COVID-19 measures in visible locations to ensure that customers are also adhering to what is required.

7. Occupational Health and Safety Measures and Recommendations

All existing Occupational Health and Safety provisions will continue to apply to all workplaces during this time and further information and advice is available on the Health and Safety Authority website www.hsa.ie including additional occupational health and safety information on the specific COVID-19 webpages: https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/covid-19_coronavirus.html.

Where the control of infection measures implemented requires changes to work activities, the employer is required to review and update their occupational health and safety risk assessments and safety statement in order to take account of any work changes which may arise following implementation.

As employers implement the above measures in the workplace to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for workers, specific occupational health and safety measures may also need to be considered and implemented.

Employers should first take into account the most up-to-date official public health advice and guidance from the Department of Health and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (see

above) on how to mitigate the health risk including measures advised by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for work related travel. Where a risk of exposure to COVID-19 is identified in the COVID-19 Response plan (see section above), an occupational health and safety risk assessment should also be completed. All of the public health and occupational health and safety measures should be developed in consultation with workers and/or Trade Union and ultimately communicated to workers and others at the workplace.

Employers should also communicate with safety representatives selected or appointed under the Occupational Health and Safety legislation and consult with workers on safety measures to be implemented in the workplace. The employer should use the appointed occupational safety and health officer or an external competent person to ensure the effective implementation of changes to work activities and the implementation of infection prevention and control measures in the workplace at the place of work. For further information on the role of Safety Representative see this [link](#).

7A. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS UNDER OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY LEGISLATION IF A WORKER CONTRACTS COVID-19

There is no requirement for an employer to notify the Health and Safety Authority if a worker contracts COVID-19. Diseases are not reportable under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Reporting of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences) Regulations 2016 (S.I. No. 370 of 2016).

COVID-19 is however reportable under [the Infectious Diseases \(Amendment\) Regulations 2020](#) by a medical practitioner who becomes aware of or suspects an instance of such disease. Such a report should be sent to the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) in the HSE: <https://www.hpsc.ie/notifiablediseases/>.

7B. FIRST AID

In the event that first aid is required in the workplace it may not be possible to maintain a distance of 2 metres. Workers with a specific role in acting as first responders should be provided with updated training on infection prevention and control principles including

performance of hand hygiene and appropriate use of personal protective equipment when delivering first aid.

Further advice on first aid is available from the Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC):

https://www.phecit.ie/PHECC/Publications_and_Resources/Newsletters/Newsletter_Items/2020/PHECC_COVID_19_Advisory_v1.aspx

7C. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Employers should put in place support for workers who may be suffering from anxiety or stress. Workers, when they return to work, may have gone through traumatic events such as the serious illness or death of a relative or friend, or be experiencing financial difficulties or problems with their personal relationships.
- Workers who are returning to the workplace after a period of isolation are likely to have concerns about the risk of infection or changes to their job due to the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Employers should provide workers with information on publicly available sources of support and advice and information about the prevention and control measures taken in the workplace to reduce the risk of infection.
- Employers should ensure workers are made aware of and have access to any business provided Employee Assistance Programmes or Occupational Health service.
- A range of supports and advice is also available from the Health and Safety Authority on work related stress at:
https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Workplace_Stress/. The Authority also provides a free online risk assessment tool for addressing work related stress: WorkPositive (www.workpositive.ie).
- The Government's "*In This Together Campaign*" also provides information on minding one's mental health as well as tips on staying active and connected and may be useful for use by employers and workers:
<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/together/?referrer=/together/>

7D. HEATING, VENTILATION AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC)

Air conditioning is not generally considered as contributing significantly to the spread of COVID-19. Switching off air conditioning is not required to manage the risk of COVID-19. For organisations without air conditioning adequate ventilation is encouraged, for example, by opening windows where feasible etc.

7E. LEGIONELLA

For some places of work such as hotels, leisure facilities, offices, dental clinics and hairdressers, the employer needs to put in place control measures to avoid the potential for Legionnaires' disease before they reopen. Further advice on the prevention of Legionnaires' disease after the COVID-19 Pandemic is available at:

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/biological_agents/specific_biological_agents_infections/legionellosis/covid-19_legionella_information_note.pdf

8. Advice for Employers and Workers

- **The Health and Safety Authority Workplace Contact Unit** at wcu@hsa.ie and **Tel:** 1890 289 389.
- **The Health Service Executive**, HSElive at **Tel:** 1850 241850
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/hselive/>
- **Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation Business Support Call Centre** - for information on the government supports available to businesses and enterprises affected by COVID-19 - <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/>. The Call Centre can be contacted at **Tel:** 01 631 2002 and **Email:** infobusinesssupport@dbei.gov.ie
- **Workplace Relations Commission (WRC):**
https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/news-media/workplace_relations_notices/covid-19-update.html
Information and Customer Service **Tel:** 059 9178 990

- **National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI):** <https://www.nsai.ie/>
Tel: 01 807 3800

9. Information on Public Health and Occupational Health and Safety

- Health & Safety Authority: www.hsa.ie
- Health Service Executive:
<https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/?source=banner-www>
- Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC):
<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/>
- European Commission:
https://oshwiki.eu/wiki/COVID-19:_Back_to_the_workplace_-_Adapting_workplaces_and_protecting_workers
- EU OSHA:
<https://osha.europa.eu/en/highlights/covid-19-back-workplace-safe-and-healthy-conditions>
- World Health Organization (WHO):
<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
- World Health Organisation (WHO) Getting Your Workplace Ready guide:
<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/getting-workplace-ready-for-covid-19.pdf>
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC):
<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china>
- International Labour Organisation (ILO): https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/safety-and-health-at-work/events-training/events-meetings/world-day-safety-health-at-work/WCMS_742463/lang--en/index.htm

10. Information on Business Continuity and Supports

- NSAI Workplace Protection and Improvement Guide: <https://www.nsai.ie/covid-19workplaceprotection/>
- NSAI Retail Protection and Improvement Guide: <https://www.nsai.ie/covid-19retailprotection/>
- Information on business continuity voucher from IDA, EI and LEOs: <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/News-And-Events/Department-News/2020/March/26032020.html>

Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation
Department of Health
Health and Safety Authority
Health Service Executive



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

ANNEX C

A schedule of the records is below and the records themselves are available at the following link: <https://dfa-ie.sharefile.eu/d-s81bf72c98c2a40888bb52a119eb8809e>

Date		Record Description	Number of pages	Granted/Part-Granted/Refused	Section exempted under:
1	06/03/2020	Email from Director General Corporate Services Division to all staff regarding COVID-19 and Department business continuity	2	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)
2	13/03/2020	Email from Director General Corporate Services Division to all staff regarding COVID-19 and working arrangements	3	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)
3	19/05/2020	Email from Private Secretary to the Secretary General (PSSG) forwarding Health and Safety advice from Security and Corporate Compliance Unit	2	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)
4	22/05/2020	DPER guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID19	39	Granted	
5	02/06/2020	Message from Director General of Corporate Services Division to all staff updating on working arrangements	2	Granted	
6	09/06/2020	Corporate Services COVID-19 DFAT FAQs June 2020	7	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)
7	10/06/2020	Email from Deputy Secretary General (DSG) to Secretary General sharing draft message for all Heads of Mission (HOMs) in preparation for the UN Security Council election vote on 17 June 2020	1	Granted	
7a	10/06/2020	Attachment – Draft message to all HOMs	3	Granted	
8	10/06/2020	Email from Secretary General to DSG including sharing updated draft message for all HOMs in preparation for the UN Security Council election vote on 17 June 2020	1	Granted	
8a	10/06/2020	Attachment – Updated draft message to all HOMs	3	Granted	

9	10/06/2020	Email from DSG to UN Policy Unit sharing the message to issue to all HOMs in preparation for the UN Security Council election vote on 17 June 2020	1	Granted	
9a	10/06/2020	Attachment – Final message to issue to all HOMs	3	Granted	
10	10/06/2020	Email from UN Policy Director to regional directors, forwarding message from Secretary General regarding preparations for UN Security Council election vote on 17 June	3	Granted	
11	12/06/2020	Email from the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN in New York (PMUN) setting out roles for PMUN and HQ staff in advance of the UN Security Council election vote on 17 June 2020, including for possible Round 2 vote	3	Part-granted	Section 33.(2).(b).(i) Section 35.(1).(a) Section 37.(1)
11a	12/06/2020	Attachment – Work shifts in case of Round 2 vote	1	Granted	
11b	12/06/2020	Attachment – Timezones tracking sheet	2	Granted	
11c	12/06/2020	Attachment – Vote allocation	5	Not granted	Section 33.(2).(b).(i) Section 35.(1).(a)
11d	12/06/2020	Attachment – Message from Secretary General to HOMs	3	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)
12	14/06/2020	Email PMUN to DFA UN Security Council e-mailing group regarding possible phonecalls by the Taoiseach in the case of a Round 2 vote	2	Part-granted	Section 33.(2).(b).(i) Section 37.(1)
12a	14/06/2020	Attached - List of possible Round 2 target phonecalls sorted by timezone	4	Part-granted	Section 33.(2).(b).(i)
12b	14/06/2020	Attached – List of possible Round 2 target phonecalls sorted by principal	3	Not granted	Section 33.(2).(b).(i)

13	15/06/2020	Emails among UN Policy Unit staff regarding possible Round 2 calls, including a list of possible calls for the Taoiseach, MoS Cannon and MoS McEntee	3	Part-granted	Section 33.(2).(b).(i) Section 37.(1)
14	15/06/2020	Emails among UN Policy Unit staff discussing possible calls by the Tánaiste in case of a Round 2 vote	4	Part-granted	Section 33.(2).(b).(i) Section 37.(1) Section 35.(1).(a)
15	15/06/2020	Emails among UN Policy Unit staff regarding draft Twitter plan for period surrounding 17 June vote	1	Part-granted	Section 37.(1) Section 42.(h)
15a	15/06/2020	Attachment - UN Security Council campaign logo	1	Granted	
16	15/06/2020	Email from envoy to UN Policy Unit staff suggesting possible contacts for outreach in case of a Round 2 vote	1	Part-granted	Section 37.(1) Section 33.(2).(b).(i)
17	15/06/2020	DPER Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19	41	Granted	
18	15/06/2020	Email from UN Policy Unit regarding outreach phonecalls in advance of UN Security Council election vote	1	Part-granted	Section 37.(1) Section 33.(2).(b).(i)
18a	15/06/2020	Attachment – Outreach tracking document	2	Not granted	Section 37.(1) Section 33.(2).(b).(i) Section 35.(1).(a)
19	16/06/2020	Emails from UN Policy Unit regarding possible political level calls to States in case of Round 2 vote	4	Part-granted	Section 33.(2).(b).(i)
20	16/06/2020	Email from UN Policy Unit to PMUN updating coordination table for possible Round 2 vote	6	Part-granted	Section 37.(1) Section 33.(2).(b).(i)
21	16/06/2020	Email from UN Policy Unit staff member noting intention to work from home in the morning and Iveagh House in the afternoon of 17 June	1	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)
22	16/06/2020	Correspondence among UN Policy Unit staff regarding outreach in case of a Round 2 vote	3	Part-granted	Section 37.(1) Section 33.(2).(b).(i)

					Section 35.(1).(a)
23	16/06/2020	Email from UN Director to Secretary General sending draft message regarding outreach in case of Round 2 vote	2	Part-granted	Section 33.(2).(b).(i) Section 35.(1).(a)
24	16/06/2020	Email from Political Director (PD) assistant to PD sharing list of PD counterparts' contact details for possible outreach calls ahead of votes	1	Part-granted	Section 37.(1) Section 33.(2).(b).(i)
24a	16/06/2020	Attachment containing list of PD counterparts' contact details	1	Not granted	Section 37.(1) Section 33.(2).(b).(i) Section 35.(1).(a)
25	16/06/2020	Emails from UN Policy Unit staff noting intentions to work in Iveagh House in the afternoon of 17 June	2	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)
26	16/06/2020	Emails between PSSG and UN Policy Unit staff regarding the viewing of vote results in the Iveagh House, noting social distancing measures	1	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)
27	16/06/2020	Email from Corporate Services Management Unit requesting a meeting with operational HQ units to update on the work of the COVID-19 Safe Working Group	1	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)
27a	16/06/2020	Attached – TORs for COVID-19 Safe Working Group	5	Granted	
28	17/06/2020	Email from UN Policy Unit staff noting intentions to work in Iveagh House in the afternoon or evening of 17 June	1	Granted	
29	17/06/2020	Email from UN Policy Director to HOMs sharing speaking points if needed for possible Round 2 vote outreach	1	Part-granted	Section 33.(2).(b).(i)
29a	17/06/2020	Attachment speaking points for possible Round 2 vote	1	Granted	
30	17/06/2020	Emails between UN Policy Unit staff regarding possible Round 2 calls / recent ECOSOC and PGA elections	2	Part-granted	Section 37.(1) Section 33.(2).(b).(i)
31	17/06/2020	Email from UN Policy Unit preparing for tracking possible	1	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)

		Round 2 calls			Section 33.(2).(b).(i)
32	17/06/2020	Email from Political Director to assistant concerning outreach to a counterpart in case of Round 2 vote	2	Part-granted	Section 37.(1) Section 33.(2).(b).(i)
33	17/06/2020	Email from UN Director to regional directors, the Management Board and UN Policy Unit, providing an update in advance of the UN Security Council election vote and possible need to mobilise in case of a Round 2 vote	1	Granted	
34	17/06/2020	Email from Director of Communications to PD sharing draft Press Release on Ireland's successful election to UN Security Council	1	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)
34a	17/06/2020	Attachment – Draft Press Release	2	Granted	
35	17/06/2020	Email from PD to Director of Communications sharing revised draft Press Release on Ireland's successful election to UN Security Council	1	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)
35a	17/06/2020	Attachment - Revised draft Press Release (edits in track changes)	2	Granted	
35b	17/06/2020	Attachment - Revised draft Press Release (clean version)	2	Granted	
36	17/06/2020	Emails between UN Policy Unit staff discussing approach to outreach in case of a Round 2 vote	3	Part-granted	Section 33.(2).(b).(i) Section 37.(1)
37	17/06/2020	Emails between UN Policy Unit staff regarding tracking of possible Round 2 voting intentions	2	Part-granted	Section 37.(1) Section 33.(2).(b).(i)
38	26/06/2020	DPER Working from Home during COVID-19: Guidance for Civil Service Organisations	23	Granted	
39	29/06/2020	Email from PSSG to Director General Corporate Services approving draft message to issue to staff regarding COVID-19 Safe Working, Phase 3	2	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)
40	06/07/2020	Corporate Services Division, COVID-19 DFAT FAQs	8	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)

41	28/07/2020	Corporate Services Division COVID-19 DFAT FAQs	9	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)
42	27/07/2020	Covid-19 Safe Working Group – Final COVID-19 Guidelines for Meetings in the DFAT HQ Workplace	14	Part-granted	Section 32.(1).(a).(ix) Section 37.(1)
43	27/07/2020	Email from Director Human Resources Strategy and Operations to DFA Management Board Members regarding Guidance for meetings in the DFAT HQ Workplace	1	Part-granted	Section 37.(1)
44	27/07/2020	Message from Director Corporate Services Division to HQ staff: DFA Building Check-In/Check-Out from Monday, 27 July 2020	2	Granted	
45	30/07/2020	DPER Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19	26	Granted	
46	24/08/2020	DPER Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19	25	Granted	
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