



An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

# COVID-19 Guidelines for CRS Staff

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**Version:** 2

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Approved by Tusla Crisis Management Team – COVID-19

**Tusla's Children's Residential Service is working closely with the HSE to help stop the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).**

There are regular updates on the Tusla Hub and HSE website:

<https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

<https://www.tusla.ie/staff/COVID-19-information-and-advice-for-tusla-staff/COVID-19-guidance-and-advice-for-delivery-of-critical-frontline-services/>

You should keep yourself informed in relation to the evolving situation.

**The current guidance from the HSE is that you should:**

- [Wash your hands properly and often.](#)
- [Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze.](#)
- [Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands.](#)
- [Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.](#)

For all Children's Residential Centres, Regional CRS Managers / Senior Managers NPPT are continually liaising with the National CRS office on the unfolding events surrounding the coronavirus.

Practicing good hand and respiratory hygiene is the best way you can protect against the spread of infection.

It is vital that we all follow the guidelines around hand and environmental hygiene and cough etiquette, as it is the first line of defence to this virus. A copy of these guidelines should be displayed in key locations of all workplaces.

Definitions of COVID-19 symptoms are available at the following links below - if you, or a child in your centre, have the specific symptoms outlined:

Hpsc.ie <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/casedefinitions/>

Gov.ie <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/472f64-COVID-19-coronavirus-guidance-and-advice/#symptoms>

**If the symptoms are present, you should immediately:**

- Self isolate, or in the case of a young person being symptomatic support them to self-isolate.
- Contact the relevant GP or Out of Hours Doctor for advice. Identifying that you or the young person are from a children's residential setting.
- Contact the COVID-19 Health Care Staff helpline on **1850 420 420** for further advice and guidance.
- Give all relevant details of your centre (i.e. name, eircode and contact details) to the helpline ensuring that you identify that you are calling from a children's residential service and the numbers of other young people in the centre.
- Take a contact name (and number if this is available).

- Follow the advice of the medical professionals and take account of what the next steps are to be.
- Contact your line manager to advise of the information received and to discuss and agree the required next steps for actions for the children and young people.
- If presenting as symptomatic it is important to note that under no circumstances should anyone travel to a GP's surgery or, to a hospital emergency department unless medically advised to do so.
- Medical advice will inform all actions in the intervening period between contact and testing. Actions in the intervening period between contact and testing will be informed by the medical advice available and / or direction in place from the line managers. Unless otherwise determined by medical advice, staff should continue to present for shift as normal.
- Where a member of your service's Management team is not available please contact the Regional Management team or in the case of Special Care, the Special Care Directors or Deputy Directors directly.

**To help stop the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) you may be asked to either:**

- [Self-isolate](#)
- [Limit social interactions with other people](#)

**The difference between self-isolation and limited social interactions?**

*Self-isolation:*

Self-isolation means staying indoors and completely avoiding contact with other people. You may need to do this if you have [symptoms of coronavirus](#).

A public health doctor will ask you to [self-isolate](#) if they think you may have coronavirus. This could be before you get tested for coronavirus or while you wait for test results. This HSE direction for CRS will be issued on a case-by-case basis depending on the circumstances presenting.

*Limited Social Interactions:*

Limited social interaction is avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible. You may need to do this if you are a close contact of a confirmed case of coronavirus. This is to stop other people from getting it, if you develop symptoms.

**If one of the young people in your centre is suspected to have the COVID-19 virus, you should:**

Encourage the young person / child who is suspected to have the virus to isolate in the house i.e. moving to one area of the house such as a bedroom, or non – communal space, while awaiting advice from the HSE. Follow the guidance as per the protocol on page 2 of this document.

Monitor symptoms. Call for medical assistance if symptoms get worse or you have concerns for their immediate health.

**If you or another staff member is suspected to have to Covid-19 virus, you should:**

Alert your colleagues and take appropriate measures to self - isolate to the designated self isolation area in order to protect others. Where this is not immediately possible you should wear a mask.

Bring your phone with you and follow the guidance and protocol as set out on page 2 of this document.

**If you are at home and your GP suspects, you have the COVID-19 virus you should:**

- Stay at home, in a room with the window open.
- Keep away from others in your home as much as you can.
- Monitor your symptoms regularly - call a doctor if they get worse.

**How to limit social interaction if you are asked to:**

A public health doctor may have asked you to limit social interaction. This is because you have been in close contact with a case of coronavirus. If you have, avoid contact with other people as much as possible.

Examples of close contact may be considered as:

- Spending more than 15 minutes' face-to-face contact within 2 metres of an infected person

**Caring for a Young Person or someone else in self-isolation**

You may be caring for a young person while they are in self-isolation.

**If you are, you should:**

- Manage your environment as best as possible, maintaining distance and avoid contact touching
- Wash your hands properly every time you have contact with the person
- Encourage the person you are caring for to wear a mask

**Caring for a Young person who has been diagnosed with COVID 19**

If medical advice is that the young person does not require hospitalisation and needs to be cared for at home:

- Follow the direction of medical professionals, seek advice on how to manage this from the medical professionals
- Manage your environment as best as possible maintaining distance wherever possible.

- Where possible isolate them, making them comfortable in their room, encourage them to stay there and not to access communal areas where this is possible.
- Wear available PPE as per HSE instruction, where this is required and instructed.
- Where possible the same staff member per shift should care for this young person
- Where communal space needs to be accessed the young person should be instructed to wear a face mask and maintain hand washing protocols.

**If symptoms develop or get worse in isolation, phone your GP or emergency department (ED).**

**In all cases of emergency contact 112 / 999**

### **Health and Safety**

- The Health and Safety Advisor for CRS is Paul Lennon. Your Regional / Senior Managers will be liaising with the H&S advisor on an ongoing basis.
- All managers and staff should make themselves aware of the updated Health & Safety guidance, the centres safety statement and risk assessment documents.

### **Cleaning & Infection Control**

- Intensified cleaning of the centre and house car should continue. Please refer to the CMT guidance document in relation to the required cleaning in children's residential services: [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/CMT-AD-38-2020\\_Guidance\\_for\\_Staff\\_on\\_Cleaning\\_Childrens\\_Residential\\_Centres\\_during\\_the\\_Covid-19.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/CMT-AD-38-2020_Guidance_for_Staff_on_Cleaning_Childrens_Residential_Centres_during_the_Covid-19.pdf)

### **General day to day operations**

- All staff must be familiar with the workplace site specific risk assessment and safety statement
- Surgical Face Masks are available to young people and staff where this is required in line with the HSE / CMT guidance in relation to the usage of face covering in specific settings such as travelling in the car, public transport, shops etc.
- Visits to and from the centre should where possible be planned in advance in order to allow sufficient time for planning and implementation of the HSE guidelines.
- All visitors to the centre wherever possible should be known in advance.
- The visitor's logs should be maintained in order to aid possible need for contact tracing. All visitors should complete the visitor / contractor COVID19 questionnaire. [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/CMT-AD-69-2020\\_Tusla-Visitor-Contractor\\_COVID-19\\_Questionnaire\\_2020-06-16.docx](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/CMT-AD-69-2020_Tusla-Visitor-Contractor_COVID-19_Questionnaire_2020-06-16.docx)
- All staff must complete the mandatory return to work training **Mandatory Covid-19 training**
- All staff must complete the mandatory declaration form **Mandatory declaration form**

### **HIQA's Infection Control Hub**

- HIQA has opened a new infection prevention and control hub to assist providers and staff of nursing homes, residential centres for people with disabilities, special care units and Tusla's children's residential settings.

- In addition to advice on dealing with an outbreak, it would also offer advice on infection prevention, and control measures, when caring for a resident with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, and help deal with staff queries.
- The HUB will be available Monday to Friday from 9am-5pm and will increase availability depending on demand. It can be contacted by telephone on 1800 220 000 or by email at [DCIPCSupport@hiqa.ie](mailto:DCIPCSupport@hiqa.ie)

More information can be found on <https://www.hiqa.ie/>

## **PPE CRS guidance**

This guidance is specific to Children's Residential Care Services and should be read in conjunction with the National PPE guidance issued by the CMT on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020 [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/CMT-AD-18-2020\\_COVID-19\\_PPE\\_Guidance\\_Note\\_V1.3\\_2020-06-16\\_.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/CMT-AD-18-2020_COVID-19_PPE_Guidance_Note_V1.3_2020-06-16_.pdf)

- If Social Care staff / centre management believe that any young person in their service has the symptoms outlined on the hpsc.ie or gov.ie websites, medical advice must be sought and staff and management must act accordingly to that medical advice.
- Consideration in relation to the use of PPE in relation to a specific case must be guided by the medical advice available and an individual risk-assessment that should be carried out by the Centre Manager in conjunction with the Deputy Regional Manager / Deputy Director Special Care and or the Regional Manager / Director Special Care for CRS, in relation to all instances of potential exposure to COVID-19 infection within a Children's Residential Care Centre
- All PPE orders for Children's Residential Care Services are procured through the National CRS office and are accessed by your service through your Regional Manager. No purchasing of PPE outside of this process should be placed by any staff member or manager. This is to ensure both value for money, and more importantly, that the quality of all products procured are to an acceptable standard.
- Goggles will be issued to individual members of staff where required. They must only be used by that member of staff to prevent cross contamination of the virus. The goggles should be washed using detergent and hot water, and subsequently disinfected with disinfecting product effective for killing viruses.
- (Please refer to your Centre Manager for the latest information in relation to PPE located in your Centre). Additional Personal Protective Equipment will be issued to centres when there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. We are confident that we have managed to procure sufficient stock of PPE to date to respond to any of our services that require it due to a suspected / confirmed case.
- All staff should complete the <https://www.hseland.ie> training module". **Putting on and taking off PPE in community healthcare settings**. Please ensure that you complete both sections: **1) Putting on PPE 2) Removing PPE**
- In accordance with Health Protection Surveillance Centre guidance <https://www.hpsc.ie>, PPE waste must be disposed as follows:
  - o When a staff member is finished using PPE and cleaning material they should remove the PPE and place it, as instructed on the HSEland training, into the first bag.

- When all applicable waste has been placed into this bag the last person to use it, while wearing a new pair of gloves, should tie it closed i.e. knot the neck of the bag, and place this bag into another bag. Do not squeeze the bags or squash the contents.
- Remove and store the bags in a safe location (locked if possible) and advise staff where this bag is.
- Disposal routes:
  - If it is confirmed COVID-19 **IS NOT PRESENT**, the bags can be disposed in the normal general waste stream.
  - If it is confirmed COVID-19 **IS PRESENT**, contact the local public health office and request guidance on what to do with the waste.

### Responding to challenging behaviour guidance:

- The Assessment, Consultation and Therapy Service (ACTS) have provided a guidance document in relation to responding to, and understanding, challenging behaviour during this public health emergency. It is available from your manager or on the Tusla Hub which is available at <https://www.tusla.ie/staff/COVID-19-information-and-advice-for-tusla-staff/COVID-19-guidance-and-advice-for-delivery-of-critical-frontline-services/> along with the latest updates from the agency in relation to the COVID-19 public health emergency.
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**Where it is the case that staff need to attend to duty in another centre or service the same guidance and direction applies in all instances.**

This document will be updated as required by Management in line with HSE guidelines.



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