



Senior Citizens Concern CLG

COVID 19 (Coronavirus) Policy and Procedure

This organisation is committed to taking all reasonable preventative measures required to safeguard the health and safety of our employees, contractors, volunteers and clients during this current Covid-19 pandemic.

This policy has been written in line with new Government guidelines published in May 2020, 'Return to Work Safely Protocol, Covid-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers and Works'. This policy will be implemented to further enhance the existing Covid-19 safety measures that have already been implemented in this organisation to date.

How Covid-19 is Spread and Best Ways to Prevent Spread

The Covid-19 virus 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 then unknowingly 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. Therefore, the best way to prevent person-to-person spread of Covid-19 is to:

- Practice excellent hand hygiene practices i.e., regular washing with soap and warm water or use of alcohol-based gel.
- Practice good respiratory etiquette i.e., cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow or, use a disposable tissue and place it in the bin straight after use.
- Practice physical distancing i.e., keep 2m apart at all times, where it is not possible to maintain a 2m distance and close contact is required for specific work activities or, liaison between employees and clients, then employees and clients should wear face mask / covering and or safety goggles or full-face shield.

Groups especially at risk

At present, at risk groups are those as being in the over 70s age group as well as persons of any age that have a long-term medical condition, for example, heart disease, lung disease, high

blood pressure, diabetes or cancer. Please notify the Manager/ nominated person if this applies to you.

Symptoms of Coronavirus and Action to be Taken:

It can take up to 14 days for symptoms of coronavirus to appear. The most common symptoms of coronavirus are:

- A cough
- Shortness of breath; breathing difficulties
- Fever; high temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or above.

We ask that all of our employees, contractors, volunteers and clients make themselves aware of the above symptoms and monitor their own wellbeing.

Employees, Contractor and Volunteers

If you are displaying any symptoms, please do not come to work. Self-isolate at home and contact your GP immediately for further advice. In addition, please contact the Manager by phone as soon as possible to let them know the reason you are absent from work. If the Manager is on leave please contact the Chairperson.

If you feel symptoms develop while at work, inform the Manager by phone immediately. If the Manager is on leave or unavailable, please contact the Chairperson.

Put on a face mask / face covering. Avoid contact with other members of staff and clients and avoid touching people, surfaces and objects as far as practical. Following discussion with the Manager, if you are feeling well enough to drive yourself home you may do so, once home you will need to self-isolate and contact your GP for further advice.

If you become aware that you have come into contact with a person outside of the workplace who has a confirmed case of Covid-19, please adhere to all necessary HSE advice which is to self-isolate immediately and contact your GP. Do not come into work but please do contact the Manager to let them know of your situation.

Clients

If you display any symptoms while on the premises of this organisation, please take the following steps:

- Contact the Manager on duty or by phone to let them know of your situation.
- Immediately contact your GP by phone for further guidance and advice on what to do;
- If your symptoms are severe i.e., difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, contact 999 or 112 for the ambulance service.

For further information or advice regarding Covid-19 you can also contact the HSE Live helpline on 1850 24 1850.

Hand hygiene

We have installed hand sanitising stations for employee, contractors, volunteers and clients use in every room in the building and at the front door. Employees and clients should wash their

hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or, with the alcohol-based hand sanitiser regularly. Hand washing or use of sanitising units are required in particular:

- After coughing and sneezing
- Before and after preparing food
- Before and after eating or drinking
- Every time you enter or exit the building
- Before and after having a cigarette or vaping
- When hands are dirty
- After toilet use
- If in contact with someone who is displaying any Covid-19 symptoms.

All employee, contractors, volunteers and clients should avoid touching their eyes, mouth or nose. They must not share objects/ utensils with others e.g., cups, bottles, forks etc. and should use their own pen for signing documents etc. It is important to not shake hands with others and to use a verbal greeting only. Signage is displayed on entry to this organisation as well as in visible locations around the building to remind employees and clients of hand hygiene rules.

Respiratory Hygiene

Tissues are provided for your use in common areas. Bins are provided in all work areas and are emptied daily. Good respiratory hygiene includes:

- Coughing or sneezing into the crook of your elbow if a tissue is not quickly available
- Cough/ sneeze/ blow your nose into a tissue and dispose of the tissue into the bin straight after use. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water or use the hand sanitiser.

Physical Distancing Measures

- All employees, contractors, volunteers and clients to maintain a 2m physical distance from one another as far as is practical. If this is not practical, mask must be worn. Please discuss with Manger for further guidance. All those who work at this organisation and all visitors are of course welcome to wear masks as they wish.
- Employees, contractors, volunteers and clients should all participate in physical distancing to reduce the spread of Covid-19.
- Work stations must be sanitised at least twice per day.
- Times for use of this organisation's premises may need to be staggered, planned and managed by the Manager/ nominated person according to contemporary government guidelines. Employees must contact the Manager/ nominated person if they need to enter the building other than their agreed times. Some employees and contractors may need to work from the premises and this will be discussed and agreed with the Manager/ nominated person. A combination of both remote and on-site working will be put in place to minimise numbers in the building at any one time. Please discuss any particular requirements with the Manager/ nominated person.
- Staff will sanitise their office work-station on arrival to the office in the morning and at least twice throughout the working day.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Manager/ nominated person, in conjunction with the team, will maintain a stock of disposable face masks, face shields/ and disposable gloves for those that are required to use them as part of their work activities, a stock of cleaning / sanitising products is also maintained. In the event that more stock is required at a work location, please let the Manager/ nominated person know and they will arrange to replenish these. Employees will be advised on the correct use and disposal of face masks. While PPE can help minimise the risk of exposure in some instances, it must not be used in place of other preventative measures such as hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and physical distancing.

Provision of First Aid

First aid will only be provided where absolutely required. Prior to employee/ client/ other personnel providing first aid treatment, they must take the following steps to ensure Covid-19 prevention measures are adhered to:

- Wash hands or use an alcohol gel to clean hands before treatment
- Remember do not touch your face with your hands during first aid treatment
- Wear disposable P2 face mask and other equipment where required
- Wear disposable gloves, do not touch a wound with your bare hand
- Do not touch any part of a dressing that will come in contact with a wound.
- Dispose of waste e.g., wound dressing, disposable gloves, disposable mask etc. into a designated waste bag or bin.
- Immediately after treatment, wash your hands or use an alcohol gel to clean hands.

Note: As covid-19 infects through contact with mucous membranes, all first aid personnel must wear a P2 mask during first aid treatment.

Covid-19 Personal Contact Records and Dealing with a Suspected Case of Covid-19

We ask that each employee, contractor, volunteer and client maintain their own personal contact records, the record can be as simple as a daily note at the end of each day held in your diary or in your phone. The personal contact record should list the names of people in this organisation and elsewhere that you have come into contact with, and/ or been with at a distance of less than 2m for more than 15 minutes in total. In the event that an employee or client displays symptoms of Covid-19, the Manager/ nominated person will ask for the names of employees/ clients etc. from their personal contact record.

In the event of an employee who is suspected of having contracted Covid-19 or has tested positive for Covid-19, the Manager/ nominated person will take the following action:

- Arrange for appropriate thorough cleaning and disinfection of the work areas, including equipment that the person may have used.
- Speak with the employee over the phone to get their personal contact record in order to facilitate contact tracing, i.e., names of personnel/ clients that the person was in contact with at a distance of less than 2m for more than 15 minutes in total. The Manager/ nominated person can then make decisions as to whether or not other employees or clients need to be informed and/ or self-isolate.
- Provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSE.

General Cleaning and Sanitising Requirements

Depending on the temperature, humidity and nature of objects being used on a daily basis, current evidence suggests that COVID-19 may remain contagious on a surface for hours to days. Therefore, excellent cleanliness and hygiene is a must.

Regularly cleaning and disinfecting shared surfaces and high touch point areas is crucial to slowing the spread of COVID-19. Thorough cleaning means physically wiping away surface contamination first with a detergent (soap and hot water) prior to sanitising with an anti-bacterial/antiseptic disinfectant with proven effectiveness against viruses. Regular sanitising of frequently touched surfaces e.g., door handles, light switches etc. can be done at least twice throughout the day using an anti-bacterial/antiseptic disinfectant with a thorough clean being carried out at least once a day.

- Everybody must use the hand sanitisers on entry to the building.
- Work station must be regularly wiped down throughout the working day and given a through clean at the end of the working day.
- All door handles and frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice throughout the day by designated persons. Examples of frequently touched surfaces and objects that will need routine disinfection are: tables; doorknobs; light switches; counter surfaces; door/ window/ cupboard or other handles; desks; phones; keyboards; toilets; taps and sinks; touch screens; microwave door handle; kettle etc.
- Staff will clean all work areas as normal ensuring that anti-bacterial/ sanitising products are used after wiping or washing down areas. Follow the instructions on the label of the product and check they can be used on the surface being cleaned. Wear rubber gloves as required when using cleaning products and keep cleaning products stored under lock and key when not in use. Wash or sanitise your hands before you put on the rubber gloves and immediately after taking off the rubber gloves.
- Please wipe down all controls on the fridge, microwave etc. before and after use.

Managing waste

- All personal waste including used tissues and all cleaning waste should be placed in a plastic rubbish bag.
- The bag should be tied when it is almost full and then place it into a second bin bag and tied.
- Once the bag has been tied securely it should be left somewhere safe for collection.

Training and Information for Employees

- All employees will be briefed on the content of this procedure by their Manager/ nominated person. A copy of this policy procedure will be displayed in a visible location.
- The procedure is a live document and as such will be subject to regular review and update in line with Government and public health advice and guidance. Any changes or updates to the procedure will immediately be notified to employees by the Manager/ nominated person.

- We have displayed safety signage in clearly visible locations in the building regarding HSE Covid-19 advice on hand washing / sanitising, signs and symptoms of Covid-19.
- Any concerns with regards to health and safety and Covid-19 prevention measures should be referred to the Manager/ nominated person immediately. Should employees have any concerns or queries with regards to Covid-19 and how it may specifically affect their own health or any underlying condition they may have, please contact the Manager/ nominated person for information and assistance.

Implementing Covid-19 Work Safety Procedure

Our management team and Board is ultimately responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of our Covid-19 policy in this organisation

As the information and advice issued by the Government continues to evolve, we may need to make updates to our procedure to reflect any such advice e.g., temperature taking in line with public health advice. Therefore, it should be noted that the attached procedure is subject to change, the Manager will brief employees and clients as changes occur.

All employees and clients have a duty of care towards themselves as well as a legal responsibility, to comply with all safety precautions and procedures implemented to ensure their own health and safety, that of other personnel in this organisation and to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure they continue to strictly adhere to HSE guidelines.

Guidance for infection prevention and control

Further information on COVID-19 is available on the HSE website at:

- <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html> and the HPSC website at: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/guidanceforon-clinicalsettings/>
- <https://www.hpsc.ie/az/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/>

Support and Supervision

We would like to remind employees that, if they have any worries or concerns about any aspect of the current situation, to contact the Manager/ nominated person for support.

Working from Home Guidelines

During this time, we expect that anyone who can work from home should in order to limit social interaction daily according to government guidelines. As we cannot risk assess everyone's home, please answer the following questions for yourself and ensure that you look after your own safety when working from home.

What are my responsibilities as an employee, when working from home?

If you are an employee working from home, you have a responsibility to take reasonable care of yourself and other people who may be affected by the work you are doing.

You must:

- Cooperate with your employer and follow their instructions,
- Protect yourself and others from harm during the course of your work, e.g., you must take care of any equipment provided and report defects immediately to your employer
- Report injury to your employer immediately, and
- Follow procedures that have been put in place by your employer regarding regular contact.

How can I best set up my workspace?

Identify a suitable space within your home for home working. When identifying a suitable space consider:

- Suitable light, heat and ventilation to be able to work comfortably,
- Keeping the work space tidy,
- Making sure the floor is clean, dry and free from slip, trip and fall hazards,
- Suitably located power sockets to avoid trailing cables and overloading of sockets, and
- Internet access.

What do I need to consider when using computers and digital technology when home working?

For temporary home working the following should be considered:

- Varying work tasks so that you are not working in the same position for long periods of time.
- Placing equipment so as to minimise twisting or overreaching
- Take regular breaks and to stand and move for one minute every hour
- Good internet access.

It is important that a good system of communication is in place when you are working from home to ensure your safety, health and welfare is not compromised in any way. You also need regular contact for updates on work related information and feedback on the work you have completed. It will also help to prevent you feeling isolated.

Outside these pre-arranged contacts, you should also contact your employer if:

- You have an accident arising from your work activity,
- The equipment your employer has provided you with is not working properly or requires maintenance, and
- You have a specific query or concerns relating to safety, health and welfare.

General Guidelines

- Try and keep to a regular schedule for breaks and lunch, this will help keep structure
- A good chair is vital, do not work off the couch all day with laptop and this will cause issues with your back.
- Lone working can negatively impact on employees' work-related stress levels and their mental health. If employees are having difficulties with working from home, they should contact their Manager to explore solutions and/ or make other arrangements.