



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Office of the Clinical Director of Health Protection, Health Service Executive

TO: All service providers

FROM: Dr Abigail Collins, Consultant in Public Health Medicine

Dr Kevin Kelleher, Assistant National Director for Public Health and Child Health

RE: HSE public health update

DATE: 22nd July 2021

As I am sure you are aware, we are experiencing an increase in cases of Covid-19 nationally. The cases we are seeing are predominantly in the young adult population, as they are the groups who have had less opportunity for vaccination, and who are tending to meet, socialise and travel more. Covid-19 is still very transmissible and particularly so in many more social settings. You and your staff have done fantastic work responding to the pandemic and recommendations that the government and Public Health have made, and this has kept the number of cases and onward spread of infection as low as possible.

We would ask you to be particularly mindful over the next few weeks of the following:

- 1) **Travel:** Travel restrictions have recently changed and up-to-date information is available on the gov.ie website (<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/77952-government-advice-on-international-travel/#travelling-with-children>) and we recommend this is checked regularly for updated advice and guidance.

Currently for travel with children it states that 'Children between the ages of 12 and 17 will be required to have a negative RT-PCR test taken within 72 hours prior to arrival to travel into the country, unless they have valid proof of vaccination or recovery. Children of any age, travelling with accompanying vaccinated or recovered adults will not be required to self-quarantine post arrival. However, where one accompanying adult needs to self-quarantine, then all children must also self-quarantine.'

This therefore requires a conversation with parents/guardians to determine who can return straight to your facility, and who needs to self-quarantine. People should be mindful that rates of infection and opportunity for infection may be increased in certain holiday destinations and again, attention and exclusion of those with even mild symptoms, which could be Covid-19, should be implemented whilst undergoing testing.

- 2) **Vaccination:** All adults are recommended to receive Covid-19 vaccines. Vaccination is the best way we have of preventing hospital admissions and more serious end point of the disease. It also help protect all others in our community. Therefore, we strongly recommend that all staff are vaccinated as soon as they are able, and that this is supported and facilitated, as you are able, within in your facilities.

- 3) **Symptoms:** We have seen most spread of Covid-19 from people with symptoms. We would ask that you remain alert to the symptoms of staff and children within you facility. Any person with symptoms which could be consistent with Covid-19 should not attend facilities and attend for testing. This is very important for staff too, to minimise onward impact in your facilities. It is also very important to remind parents, that symptomatic children should not attend your facility, and neither should a child if a parent is undertaking testing because of symptoms themselves. We have seen people, often with fairly minor symptoms, attending facilities and which have had a significant onward impact. We would continue to ask for a precautionary approach to be taken.

- 4) **Mitigation measures:** As always, excluding symptomatic staff and students and the implementation of the recommended infection prevention and control measures all maximally help in the prevention of the onward spread of any Covid-19 that is identified in someone attending your facility. We strongly recommend that you adhere still to these measures, and enjoy outside play where possible; with sunsmart safety precautions implemented at this current point. A recent webinar refreshed relevant advice and we would recommend that you watch this on the first five website <https://first5.gov.ie/guidance/public-health>.

Many thanks for your continued support and engagement in these difficult times