



Updates to

**Guidance to Support the Resumption of
Centre-Based Respite Services for People
with Disabilities**

(Originally published August 2020)

15th December 2021



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1.0 Introduction

While some respite services continued to provide limited supports throughout the pandemic, others closed completely. Respite Services have been fully operational since August 2020 in line with the **Guidance to Support the Resumption of Centre-Based Respite Services for People with Disabilities.**

The purpose of this document is to provide updates to that [original document](#). Since that guidance was published, Ireland has developed a very successful vaccination programme where over 91% of our population has been vaccinated to date. In addition to that, a booster programme is underway and many people with disabilities have now had three doses of the COVID vaccine. Knowing that the vaccine is effective after the immune response, especially following the booster vaccination and knowing that the vast majority of the population attending Respite Services are now fully vaccinated provides significant reassurance and confidence as Respite Services fully reopen.

The success of the vaccination programme has allowed the country to open back up and ease many of the restrictions that we have lived with for the past twenty months, but the pandemic is not over and we now need to learn to “live” with the virus in our communities. To that end, we are collating the most current infection prevention and control advice and providing the links to those guidances in this document. This update will highlight the areas in the original publication (August 2020) so it should be read **in conjunction** with that with that [original document](#).

The Alignment with HSPC Guidance (1.1), Scope and Purpose (2.0) and Key Principles (3.0) remain the same.

2.0 Transmission of COVID 19 – Recap

- Most people get COVID-19 from being close to an infectious person indoors for a quarter of an hour or more
- Direct transmission through the air mainly over short distances (droplet) but also over longer distances (airborne) especially in enclosed areas with poor ventilation



- Contact transmission – lands on surface and carried to the nose/mouth/eye on your hands
- **Existing Public Health, vaccination and IPC measures remain highly effective in protecting against the new variants of the virus**
- Note increased emphasis on ventilation as we have learned more about new variants

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/residentialcarefacilities/IPC%20and%20PH%20guidance%20for%20outbreaks.pdf>

3.0 Service User Needs Assessment (4.0 in original document)

It is important for service managers to know the vaccination status of all service users attending Respite Services (both Influenza and COVID 19) and when their boosters are due, if the individual has not already received it. With regards to this section, a question regarding the **service user's vaccination status** i.e. are they fully vaccinated; does he/she have a booster vaccination, should be added to the Risk Assessment when a person is attending Respite Services.

All decisions made regarding the provision of respite to an individual must be based on **individual** risk assessments and the prioritisation criteria (section 4.3 of the original document). If the respite bed is in a location where other residents are living, the risk assessment should also take into account the vaccination status, age, and underlying medical conditions of those residents.

4.0 Attendance Log (6.7 in original document) **and Visiting**

The Attendance Log, which is Appendix X in the original document (August 2020) should be updated to include a check for proof of immunity or vaccination as per the [**Normalising Visiting in Long Term Residential Care Facilities \(LTRCFs\)**](#) (November 10, 2021 for implementation November 15th 2021). The term LTRCFs encompasses all congregated care settings where people are intended to remain for extended periods including nursing homes, certain mental health facilities and



community housing units for people with disabilities. This also needs to include a travel history check as per https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/sars-cov-2/variantsofconcern/Interim_Omicron%20guidance.pdf

[A separate document](#) was developed on July 14th 2021 which applied to people living in own-door supported accommodation or small group homes. **This document needs to be updated.**

5.0 Management of Contacts of Cases of COVID-19

The Health Protection and Surveillance Unit (HPSC) published **National Guidelines for Public Health management of contacts of cases of COVID-19 (V10.4)** on 13.12.2021. <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/contacttracingguidance/National%20Interim%20Guidance%20for%20contact%20tracing.pdf> . These National Guidelines provide updated information on the use of Rapid Antigen Detection Tests (RADTs) and period of restriction for asymptomatic fully vaccinated household contacts of confirmed cases.

6.0 Healthcare Workers (HCWs) – COVID 19 household contacts- Public health guidance

People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and who are household contacts of a case must:

- 1) Restrict movement **for 5 full days** from the day on which they are informed that they are a contact
- 2) Receive antigen tests and instructions for use of those tests.

If 5 full days have passed before the person has not completed the recommended self-testing they should continue to follow the recommended schedule of testing but they do not have to continue to restrict movement.



Note that, **derogation** from exclusion from work may apply to fully vaccinated contacts.

6.1 Derogation for the Return to Work of HCWs who are Essential for Critical Services

Further to the publication of the HPSC **National Guidelines for Public Health management of contacts of cases of COVID-19 (V 10)**, the HSE Occupational Health Department published [Derogation for the Return to Work of Healthcare Workers \(HCW\) who are Essential for Critical Services \(Issue date 22/03/2020 Review date 24th Nov 2021\) – Guideline Document](#)

This guideline is relevant to “fully vaccinated” asymptomatic HCW who are close contacts. It is appropriate that senior management on site are the decision makers regarding the need to derogate a HCW, following a risk assessment – Appendix 2 of the document. This derogation must be agreed by the HCW.

The HSE Occupational Health Department also issued the **Quick Guide for Healthcare Worker (HCW) Management (V 8)** on 3.12.2021. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/workplace-health-and-wellbeing-unit/covid-19-guidance/quick-guide-for-healthcare-worker-management.pdf>. This is a one-page document with guidance on the management of both unvaccinated and fully vaccinated HCWs.

People who are **not fully vaccinated** and who have not had a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 in the previous 9 months and who have been identified as contacts of a case of COVID-19 in any setting must:

- 1) Restrict their movements and remain off work for 14 days.
- 2) Exit from restricted movement can happen before 14 days if PCR test result taken day 10 or later does not detect virus.



7.0 Transport (8.0 in original document)

The Government Guidance [Reframing the challenge, continuing our recovery and reconnecting](#), which was published in August 2021 set out a 6-week timeframe to allow all transport to resume at **100% capacity by 22.10.2021**. This also relates to transport in disability services. Where possible and appropriate for service users, face coverings should continue to be used on transport. All other infection, prevention and control measures must still be observed. When transmission is high in a particular community, it is recommended that family members be encouraged to drive service users to and from Respite Services.

8.0 Ventilation

It is important that there is good air exchange in each room but a balance between comfort, weather and temperature control must be maintained.

9.0 Maintaining a Safe Environment – The Safety Pause

How safe is the service today- keep connected!



- Is everyone feeling OK today?
- Has everyone received COVID awareness and IPC training?
- Any new staff -what support do they need in the service?
- Have we any risks or concerns in our service today and do our staff know who to speak to?
- What is working well for us as a team ?
- What is not working so well ?
- Is there one thing we can do to improve safety in our service **today**?





10.0 Summary of Key Points in this update

- the addition of a question on the service user's evidence of immunity or vaccination, symptom check, and history of travel to the risk assessment prior to admission for respite, as well as any visitor to the respite centre
- importance of service user's COVID and Influenza vaccination status
- all decisions made regarding the provision of respite to an individual must be based on **individual** risk assessments and the prioritisation criteria
- the management of close contacts has changed as per December 13th
- a derogation can be applied to fully vaccinated healthcare workers who are close contacts but are working in an essential service (such as a Respite Centre) as per guidance issued on December 3rd
- transport in disability services is in line with public transport – 100% capacity
- need for adequate ventilation



11.0 COVID-19 Protocols and Infection Control Supports

Since the onset of COVID-19 a wealth of support information has been produced to support the public at large and in particular providers of health care services to respond to the many challenges presented by the pandemic in order to contain the virus and prevent it spreading widely.

In regard to Disability services there is a significant repository of support materials available on the HSE website and all Respite.

Service providers should become familiar with the guidance already developed that has a bearing on the provision of disability Respite Services. This guidance includes many Easy Read documents that can be utilised to support interface with disability service users or act as a basis for developing communication that is service user friendly.

11.1 List of Guidance Documents developed by HSE Disability Services

These guidance documents include the following topics and are all available on the HSE website <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>

No.	Name of Document	Date of Issue	Target Audience
1	Contingency Plan for Home Support Managers and Health Care Support Assistants and Disability Managers/Personal Assistance during the Mitigation Phase V2	22/4/2020	Home Support Managers Health Care Support Assistants Disability Managers, Personal Assistants
2	Guidance for Covid-19 in Social Care Group Homes and Residential Services - Disabilities	15/5/2020	Healthcare workers Managers In non-nurse led services



No.	Name of Document	Date of Issue	Target Audience
3	Guidance for COVID-19 in Nurse Led Residential Care Services for people with disabilities	15/05/2020	Healthcare Workers Managers In residential centres where service is nurse-led
4	Guidance for testing for COVID-19 in Disability Services V1	31/03/2020	Social Care Workers Nursing staff In residential services for people with disabilities
5	Guidance of COVID-19 testing in Disability Services <i>Easy Read Version V1</i>	31/03/2020	People with a disability Social Care Workers Nursing staff In residential services for people with disabilities
6	Guide for Supporting adults in a community residence/at home <i>Easy Read Version V1</i>	31/03/2020	Adults with a disability Carers Staff Families Who are supporting adults with disabilities
7	Guide for Supporting children in a community residence/ at home <i>Easy Read Version V1</i>	31/03/2020	Children with a disability Carers Staff Families Who are supporting children with disabilities



No.	Name of Document	Date of Issue	Target Audience
8	Streamlined hospital passport for people with disabilities who are admitted to hospital V1	31/03/2020	To be completed with people who have disabilities (with support where required) To be read by all Healthcare Workers caring for the person with a disability when they are in the hospital.
9	Guidance to support a person with additional needs who becomes distressed and angry when you try to engage with them. V1	31/03/2020	Staff or carers who do not normally work with people with disabilities, e.g. Hospital Staff
10	Support Coordination in a Pandemic – A practical checklist to avoid stressors for service users V1	31/03/2020 Updated 20/10/2020	Carers Staff Families Who are supporting people with disabilities
11	Adapted Models of Support (Non-Residential) – Guidance for all Service Providers	20/05/2020	CHOs Service Providers Who are supporting people with disabilities
12	Guidance on the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in Disability Services V4	27/04/2020 Updated 20/10/2020	Healthcare Workers Managers In residential centres for people with disabilities
13	Coronavirus (Covid-19) Frequently Asked Questions for people with disabilities and family carers	20/05/2020	People with disabilities Families



No.	Name of Document	Date of Issue	Target Audience
14	Staff Guide for communicating with people with intellectual disability and with Autism (short version)	23/04/2020	Staff in test centres, community assessment hubs, hospitals
15	Staff Guide for communicating with people with intellectual disability and with Autism	23/04/2020	Staff in test centres, community assessment hubs, hospitals
16	Staff Guide on communicating with Deaf and Hard of Hearing people	23/04/2020	Staff in test centres, community assessment hubs, hospitals
17	Staff Guide on working with an ISL or English interpreter	23/04/2020	Staff in test centres, community assessment hubs, hospitals
18	COVID-19 Guide on how to stay connected using communication apps <i>Easy to Read Version</i>	23/04/2020	People with disabilities Families
19	Covid-19 Test Process explained for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people	23/04/2020	Deaf and Hard of Hearing people
20	A message from Cathal Morgan, Head of Disability Operations, HSE for people with disabilities and their families.	24/04/2020	People with disabilities and their families
21	Clinical Pathway – Clinical Consultation required – disability services	27/04/2020	Social Care Workers Nursing staff In non-nurse led residential services for people with disabilities
22	Clinical Guide for hospital clinicians when supporting a person with a disability	19/04/2020	Staff or carers who do not normally work with people with disabilities, i.e. Hospital Staff – doctors, nurses, allied health professionals



No.	Name of Document	Date of Issue	Target Audience
23	Pathway to HIQA Registration and model for developing an Enhanced Support Facility for people with disabilities during COVID-19	16/04/2020	Service Providers for people with disabilities
24	Webinar – Prevention and Preparedness in Disability Residential Facilities	27/04/2020	Carers Staff who are supporting people with disabilities
25	Guidance on End of Life in social care-led disability centres during COVID-19	28/04/2020	Social Care Workers Nursing staff In non-nurse led residential services for people with disabilities
26	Appendices to accompany Guidance on End of Life in social care-led disability centres during COVID-19	28/04/2020	Social Care Workers Nursing staff In non-nurse led residential services for people with disabilities
27	Coronavirus (Covid-19) Frequently Asked Questions for people with disabilities and family carers <i>Easy Read version</i>	06/05/2020	People with disabilities, their families and carers
28	Q&A from Webinar held on April 27 2020	15/05/2020	Carers Staff Who are supporting people with disabilities
29	Communicating with families	15/05/2020	Carers Staff who are supporting people with disabilities
30	Supporting people who are in isolation	15/05/2020	Carers Staff Who are supporting people with disabilities



No.	Name of Document	Date of Issue	Target Audience
30a	Activities to support people in isolation	15/05/2020	Carers Staff Who are supporting people with disabilities
30b	Risk Assessment tool for people in isolation	15/05/2020	Carers Staff Who are supporting people with disabilities
30c	Disability Services Pathway (for people who may need to leave their residence for isolation)	15/05/2020	Carers Staff Who are supporting people with disabilities
31	Approved Communication Supports for Deaf Patients in healthcare settings during Covid-19 – Information Card	20/05/2020	Deaf and Hard of Hearing people Staff
32	Framework for the Resumption of Adult Disability Respite Services – supporting people with disabilities in the context of COVID-19 – the next year	29/05/2020	Adults with a disability Carers Staff and Management Families who are supporting adults with disabilities
33	Reshaping Disability Services from 2020 and beyond in line with COVID-19 restrictions (Respite, Home Supports, Residential and PA supports)	29/05/2020	Adults with a disability Carers Staff and Management Families who are supporting adults with disabilities



No.	Name of Document	Date of Issue	Target Audience
34	Interim Rights-based guidance on implementing IP&C measures and mitigating risk in Disability Services	10/7/2020 Updated 20/10/2020	People with disabilities living in small community based residential facilities Carers Staff and Management Families who are supporting adults with disabilities
35	Guidance to Support the Framework for the Resumption of Adult Day Services	10/7/2020 Updated 09/10/2021	Adults with a disability availing of Day Services Carers Staff and Management Families who are supporting adults with disabilities in Day Services
36	Guidance to Support the Resumption of Children's Disability Services	31/07/2020	Management and staff of Children's Disability Networks (CDNs) and children's disability services planning reconfiguration into CDNs who are supporting children and young people with disabilities
37	Interim Guidance on Conducting Assessments in Disability Services	31/07/2020	Multidisciplinary health and social care providers who are supporting children and young people with disabilities



No.	Name of Document	Date of Issue	Target Audience
38	Guidance to Support the Resumption of Centre-Based Respite Services for people with disabilities	14/08/2020 Updated 20/10/2020 Updated 15/12/21	Children, young people and adults with disabilities and their families Respite service providers
39	Infection, Prevention and Control Guidance for Personal Assistants	26/11/2020	Personal Assistants Service Providers who employ and provide Personal Assistants, Leaders Disabled People who employ Personal Assistants
40	Guidance measures for Disability Services in the context of current high levels of COVID-19 transmission in the community	04/01/2021 Updated 03/03/2021	Day and Respite Service Providers Home Support and PA Service Providers Adults with a disability Carers Staff and Management and Families who are supporting adults with disabilities
41	Guidance and Practical Resource Pack in Preparation for COVID-19 Vaccination Programme in Disability Services	14/01/2021	Adults with a disability Carers Staff and Management Families and anyone who is supporting people with disabilities



No.	Name of Document	Date of Issue	Target Audience
42	Information for Families of Day Service Attendees being offered the COVID-19 Vaccination	01/04/2021	Families of adults who attend Day Services Families and Carers Staff and Management of Day Services for Disabled People
43	Day Services being offered the COVID vaccination – Process to support informed consent and will and preference	01/04/2021	Families of adults who attend Day Services Families and Carers Staff and Management of Day Services for Disabled People

12.0 Acknowledgements

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