



**Stiúrtóra Náisiúnta,  
Acmhainní Daonna**

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí  
Sláinte Ospidéal Dr. Steevens',  
Baile Átha Cliath 8, D08 W2A8

**National Director  
Human Resources**

Health Service Executive,  
Dr Steevens' Hospital,  
Dublin 8, 08 W2A8

**www.hse.ie  
@hselive**

t 01 635 2319  
e nationalhr@hse.ie

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**From:** Anne Marie Hoey, National Director of Human Resources

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022

**Subject:** HR Circular 007/2022 - High/Higher risk Health Care Worker, including pregnant Health Care Workers, in the context of post Peak COVID- 19

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Dear Colleagues,

It has been agreed with stakeholders including Public Health (PH), Expert Immunology Group (EIG) and the Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (IOG) that High/Higher Risk HCW including Pregnant HCW, can return to work according to the updated Guidance for Fitness to Work for HCW in Higher Risk Categories:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/workplace-health-and-wellbeing-unit/covid-19-guidance/guidance-on-fitness-for-work-of-healthcare-workers-in-the-higher-risk-categories.pdf>

The agreed approach is that the guidance in relation to High/Higher risk HCW be stood down in a phased manner. It is acknowledged that a minority of HCW with complex

medical conditions may require ongoing restrictions, or consideration for workplace adjustments, in the shorter term.

Pregnant HCW attendance at work should be determined as per the joint Institute Obstetrics and Gynaecology /Occupational Health - Clinical Advisory Group guidance as outlined in Appendix 1 of the above document.

All High/Higher Risk HCW including Pregnant HCW, returning to work will be expected to:

- Adhere to IPC requirements
- Be supported and encouraged to complete their primary vaccination, including extended dose if required, and boosters
- Manager to complete a Risk Assessment of their workplace for COVID-19 exposure
- Be considered, in certain circumstances, to be included in extended measures, including point prevalence testing as required
- Not attend the workplace with symptoms of infection
- Be aware of new therapeutics that may assist in preventing serious disease and death.

Individual HCW with certain immune-compromised conditions, or treatment, will be assessed as per the guidance above. Individual HCW will be assessed in consultation with OH and their treating specialist, if required. It is anticipated that the vast majority of HCW in this group can return to work in their substantive posts.

There will be a minority of individual HCW with significant immune-compromise and complex medical conditions, and with no evidence of a response to vaccine. Short and long term accommodations may be necessary for some in this group in line with the HSE Rehabilitation policy.

<https://healthservice.hse.ie/filelibrary/staff/rehabilitation-of-employees-back-to-work-after-illness-policy.pdf>

**In addition:**

- All Higher and Higher Risk HCW including pregnant workers can return to work in non-clinical settings
- The Risk Assessment for COVID-19 Vaccination Guidelines for HCWs has been stood down
- The Derogation for the Return to Work of HCWs who are Essential for Critical Service guideline has been stood down
- The following Occupational Health guidance has been updated in line with new Public Health guidance:

-Assessment, testing and return to work of symptomatic HCWs

-Interim guidance for HCW close contact management

-Quick guide for HCW management

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/workplace-health-and-wellbeing-unit/covid-19-guidance/>

## Reporting Arrangements

- On the basis of the above changes, the arrangements to report employees in the above categories, made available under National Absence/Attendance code **0406 COVID-19 Available to work Cocoon** will be made obsolete from March 31<sup>st</sup> 2022. Therefore from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 this code will no longer be available for use. These revised arrangements will be set out, under separate cover, in an updated HR Circular specifically relating to COVID-19 absence/attendance reporting.

Yours sincerely



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**Anne Marie Hoey**

**National Director of Human Resources**