



	Guideline Document				
Ref: GD:08:06.1	Pregnant Healthcare Workers, Very High Risk (Vulnerable) Healthcare Workers and High Risk (Other Pre-Existing Disease) Healthcare Workers Version 6.1				
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Consultation With:	Health Protection Surveillance Centre Expert Advisory Group on COVID-19 Occupational Health Clinical Advisory Group				
Responsibility for Implementation:	Healthcare Services Management				



Updates in version 6:	
Title	Updated in line with new terminology – high and higher risk.
All	Reformatted document
2	Page number removed and section for information on Pregnant HCWs included instead.
3	Changed title to 'Higher Risk' in line with other HSE information sources Removed list of illnesses and linked instead to Department of Health – see 'Extremely Medically Vulnerable' on www.gov.ie
4	Terminology changed to 'High Risk' in line with other HSE information sources. Linked to list on HSE.ie Changed wording to tie in with linked guidance on HSE.ie Added requirement for Risk Assessment for High Risk who are essential to the service Included referral to Occupational Health for clarity as necessary.
Conclusion	Removed – each section provides appropriate advice for that cohort.
Appendix 1&2	Added Algorithm and sample risk assessment
Updates in version 6.1:	
Throughout	Terminology changed from 'Higher' risk to 'Very High Risk' in line with other HSE information sources.
3.3	Link to 'Interim Clinical Guidance – Immunosuppressant Therapy' updated



1. Introduction

This guidance provides advice for HCWs who are pregnant, Higher Risk (Vulnerable) HCWs and High Risk HCWs (HCWs with other pre-existing disease), and their managers. All HCWs must adhere to '[Current recommendations for the use of Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) in the management of suspected or confirmed COVID-19](#)'.

2. Advice for Pregnant Healthcare Workers

The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland's, Institute of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists have provided guidance for pregnant HCWs in the 'Workforce Consideration' section of the [COVID-19 Infection Guidance for Maternity Services](#).

3. Advice for Very High Risk (Vulnerable) Health Care Workers

- 3.1. As per the government guidance Very High Risk or 'Vulnerable' Healthcare Workers should not be at work
 - See advice from the [Department of Health](#) (Extremely Medically Vulnerable' groups).
 - See advice on HSE website <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/at-risk-groups.html> (Very High Risk groups)
- 3.2. These HCW can provide their manager with a letter from their treating specialist confirming their 'Vulnerable HCW' status. There is no requirement for Occupational Health input. (See algorithm Appendix 1)
- 3.3. To identify if a HCW is on immunosuppression therapies, sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection, please refer to the '[HSE COVID-19: Interim Clinical Guidance – Immunosuppressant Therapy](#)'.

4. Advice for High Risk HCWs (HCW with Other Pre-Existing Disease)

- 4.1. These are HCWs with other pre-existing disease that are defined in the 'High Risk' groups outlined by the HSE - <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/at-risk-groups.html>
- 4.2. As per national recommendations these HCWs should strictly follow the [advice on how to protect themselves from coronavirus](#).
- 4.3. The HCW should work from home if possible.



- 4.4. If it is essential they travel into work, then they must adhere to Infection Prevention and Control guidance regarding social distancing, personal protective equipment and hand washing. The manager must carry out a risk assessment to ensure all possible controls are in place (see sample risk assessment appendix 2)
- 4.5. Where possible and consistent with expressed preference of the healthcare worker it is pragmatic to allocate all these healthcare workers to the care of other patients if feasible, based on staffing availability.
- 4.6. If the HCW, who provides an essential service, believes their medical condition should exclude them from being at work, they should submit a report from their treating specialist or other relevant documentation.
- 4.7. Where clarity is required on the risk to the HCW due to their medical condition, they may be referred to Occupational Health for a medical opinion regarding fitness for work.
- 4.8. The process is outlined in an algorithm on Appendix.

5. References:

Department of Health. (2020). *Guidance on cocooning to protect people over 70 years and those extremely medically vulnerable from COVID-19*. Available: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/923825-guidance-on-cocooning-to-protect-people-over-70-years-and-those-extr/>. Last accessed 25th May 2020.

Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. (2020). *COVID-19 infection Guidance for Maternity Services*. Available: <https://www.rcpi.ie/news/releases/the-institute-of-obstetricians-and-gynaecologists-issues-guidance-on-covid-19-and-maternity-services/>. Last accessed 25th May 2020.

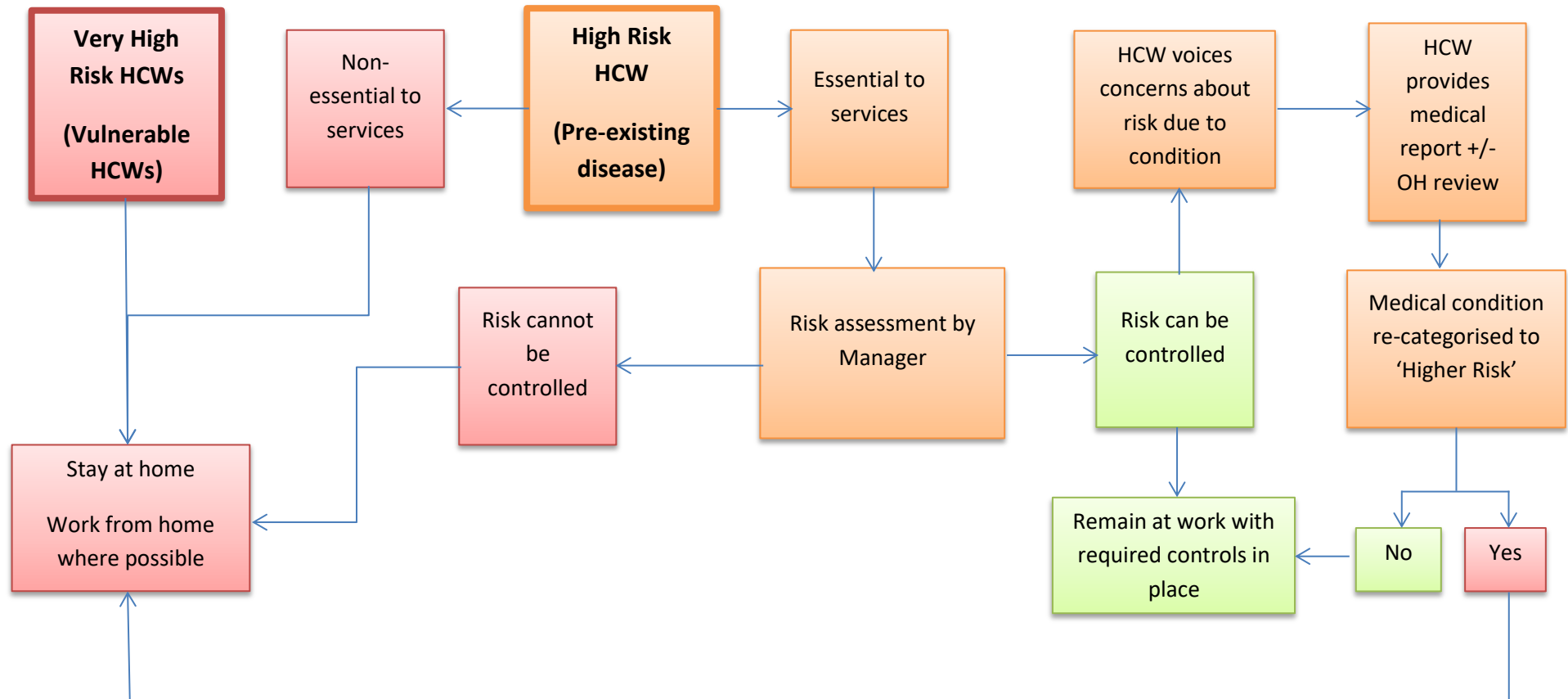
Health Services Executive. (2020). *HSE COVID-19: Interim Clinical Guidance – Immunosuppressant Therapy*. Available: <https://hse.drsteevenslibrary.ie/Covid19V2/pharmacy/medicinesmanagement>. Last accessed 25th May 2020.

Health Protection Surveillance Centre. (2020). *Current recommendations for the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the management of suspected or confirmed COVID-19*. Available: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/ppe/>. Last accessed 5th May 2020.

Health Services Executive. (2020). *People at higher risk from coronavirus*. Available: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html>. Last accessed 25th May 2020.



Appendix 1: Algorithm for Management of 'High' and 'Very High' Risk HCWs





Appendix 2: Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment of 'High Risk' Healthcare Workers					
Division:			Source of Risk:		
HG/CHO/NAS/Function:			Primary Impact Category:		
Hospital Site/Service:			Risk Type:		
Dept/Service Site:			Name of Risk Owner (BLOCKS):		
Date of Assessment:			Signature of Risk Owner:		
Unique ID No:			Risk Co-Ordinator		
			*Risk Assessor (s):		
**HAZARD & RISK DESCRIPTION		EXISTING CONTROL MEASURES	ADDITIONAL CONTROLS REQUIRED	ACTION OWNER (i.e. the Person responsible for the action)	DUE DATE
<u>HCW in 'High Risk' category working with Covid-19 cases/ at risk from potential exposure to Covid-19 cases</u>		<u>Adherence to IPC guidelines.</u>	<u>Office based work with ability to socially distance from colleagues.</u> <u>Restriction to non-Covid services</u>	<u>Line manager/designate Healthcare Worker</u>	
INITIAL RISK			Risk Status		
Likelihood	Impact	Initial Risk Rating	Open	Monitor	Closed
		HIGH			