Support bubbles

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What a support bubble is

To support those who risk isolation, a 'social bubble' will apply for the duration of Level 5. In certain situations, you can form a bubble with 1 other household (of any size).

You can then act as one extended household.

You must still keep physical distance from people outside your support bubble.

Who can form a support bubble

You can form a support bubble with another household:

- if you are living alone with children under the age of 18
- if you live alone
- if you share parenting or custody arrangements
- if you live with an adult you provide care for (for example a dependent adult relation or a partner with dementia)
- if you live by yourself and have a carer or carers who support you, including a live-in carer

How to form your support bubble

Support bubbles are designed to help you if you live on your own.

You can only form a support bubble with one other household if they are not already part of a support bubble.

You can visit the home of those in your support bubble and they can visit your home. You can also meet outdoors and in places other than home.
Wherever possible, you should choose a household in your locality to form your support bubble, but you can form a support bubble with a household outside the 5 kilometre limit.

The reason for this is to prevent the spread of COVID-19 between areas that might have lots of cases and ones that have low numbers of cases.

**What to do if someone in your support bubble develops symptoms of COVID-19 or tests positive**

If a member of the extended household develops symptoms of COVID-19 they must self-isolate immediately and phone a GP for advice. All other members of the extended household must restrict their movements immediately if they met the symptomatic person 2 days before and up to 10 days after their symptoms started.

If the symptomatic person tests positive they must continue to self-isolate for ten days from the onset of symptoms, the last 5 days of which they must be fever free. All members of the extended household must continue to restrict their movements for 14 days from their last contact with the case.

This helps control the virus as it stops the virus from spreading across multiple households.

You should not visit or meet those in your support bubble if you have symptoms of COVID-19. Similarly, those in your support bubble should not visit or meet with you if they have symptoms of COVID-19. No visits should take place if anyone has been a close contact of a confirmed case.

If you or someone in your support bubble is contacted by the HSE or your local Department of Public Health, you should follow their guidance.