



**Health
Information
and Quality
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

Protocol for the identification and review of new and updated public health guidance - COVID-19

26 June 2020

Version	5.0
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Version history		
Version	Date	Description of change
v1.0		
v2.0	14 April 2020	Addition of HSE and Department of Health as stakeholders. Revision of contents to reflect the use of the excel database as the exclusive means of storing data. Addition of criteria for choosing international organisations to be searched.
v3.0	19 May 2020	Addition of specific topics for reviews of public health guidance.
v4.0	29 May 2020	Amendment and addition of links to '2.1 Search relevant international resources'
v5.0	16 June 2020	Addition of physical distancing guidance review

1. Purpose and Aim

The purpose of this protocol is to outline the process by which the health technology assessment (HTA) directorate in the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) will identify, review and present COVID-19 public health guidance produced by international organisations.

The output from this exercise will be provided daily to relevant stakeholders within the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC), Department of Health and HSE. The aim is to inform public health guidance development using international evidence and practice.

2. Process outline

It is important that a standardised approach to the process is developed and documented, to allow for transparency and to mitigate risks which may arise due to changes in staff delivering and or receiving the information.

Three distinct steps in the process have been identified that will be completed each working day. These are listed below and described in more detail in sections 2.1-2.3.

- 1.** Search relevant international resources.
- 2.** Review and summarise identified public health guidance for COVID-19.
- 3.** Send updated COVID-19 public health guidance database to relevant stakeholders in the HPSC, Department of Health and HSE.

2.1 Search relevant international resources

The international resources included for review are from a range of ministries of health and public health agencies. These were chosen, based on them being in a similar phase of pandemic response, guidance being available in English, widespread use of the organisation's advice, and/or the working constraints of the HTA team. The following websites will be reviewed daily, to identify new or updated public health guidance on COVID-19:

- World Health Organization (WHO)
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance-publications?healthtopics=b6bd35a3-cf4f-4851-8e80-85cb0068335b&publishingoffices=aeebab07-3d0c-4a24-b6ef-7c11b7139e43&healthtopics-hidden=true&publishingoffices-hidden=true>
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)
https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/search?s=&sort_by=field_ct_publication_date&sort_order=DESC&f%5B0%5D=diseases%3A2942
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/whats-new-all.html>
- Public Health England
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>
- National Health Service England
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/page/2/?filter-keyword&filter-category&filter-publication&filter-date-from&filter-date-to&filter-order-by=modified-desc>
- Health Protection Scotland <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/>
- Public Health Agency of Northern Ireland
<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/>
<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/guidance-professionals-and-organisations>
<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/guidance-hsc-staff-healthcare-workers-and-care-providers/guidance-healthcare>
- Australian Government Department of Health
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources>
- Government of Canada
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents.html>
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/awareness-resources.html>
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>
- Ministry of Health New Zealand
<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>
- Federal Office of Public Health, Switzerland
<https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov.html>
- Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH)
<https://www.fhi.no/en/id/infectious-diseases/coronavirus/>
- Ministry of Health Singapore
<https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19/advisories-for-various-sectors>

2.2 Review and summarise identified public health guidance for COVID-19

All identified guidance published and updated will be reviewed, summarised and entered into the COVID-19 Public Health Guidance Database. The topics covered by the identified guidance will be extracted, along with links to the guidance and the date of publication/update.

2.3 Send database to relevant stakeholders

The updated COVID-19 Public Health Guidance Database will be sent to the relevant stakeholders in the Health Protection Surveillance Centre, the Department of Health, and Health Service Executive. This will be provided in Excel format.

This summary, where feasible, will be provided by 18:00 each working day.

3. Review and Update

Given the rapidly changing environment, this protocol will be regarded as a live document and amended when required to ensure it reflects any changes made to the outlined processes.

Where it is identified that a rapid review of the international sources is required for a particular topic. This will be undertaken by searching the database developed by the HTA team, the listed websites above and other relevant and available databases and literature sources.

Reviews of public health guidance have been undertaken for the following topics:

- for people working in close proximity to one another to protect workers and limit transmission of COVID-19
- on the use of masks by health care workers when not treating COVID-19 patients
- protective measures for vulnerable groups from COVID-19
- infection prevention and control measures in residential care facilities in the context of COVID-19
- physical distancing
 - This review will consider three distinct areas of guidance:
 1. the use of physical distancing measures in non-healthcare settings
 2. risk assessment tools or frameworks to assist in the development of physical distancing guidance in non-healthcare settings
 3. the use of physical distancing measures in the identification of close contacts during contact tracing.

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