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

18 September 2020

Version	6.1

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
v6.0	30 July 2020	Addition of identification and management of symptoms in children and young people attending school guidance review
V6.1	11 September 2020	Frequency for updating COVID-19 Public Health Guidance Database changed from each working day to each Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Update to Section 2.1.2 addition of additional websites

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 as required 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.

1. 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 websites listed below will be reviewed to identify new or updated public health guidance on COVID-19. Additional countries' and relevant websites used to search for specific reviews are listed in the relevant subsections.

- 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

2.1.1 Additional countries and websites for rapid review of public health guidance for identification and management of symptoms in children and young people attending school

For the rapid review of public health guidance for identification and management of symptoms in children and young people attending school, the public health guidance

from an additional nine countries are included. These countries were chosen based on preliminary scoping work carried out on a broad range of countries, where schools are either currently open or planning to re-open, and which focus on European countries. The following websites are included in this review in addition to the websites outlined in Section 2.1:

- Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, Austria
  https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Ministerium/Informationspflicht/corona.html
- Government of the Netherlands, National Institute for Public Health and Environment, Netherlands
  https://lci.rivm.nl/langdurig-neusverkouden-kinderen
  https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/coronavirus-covid-19/ouders-scholieren-en-studenten-kinderopvang-en-onderwijs
- Ministry of Education and Training, Belgium
  https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/update-corona-akkoord-over-draaiboeken-2020-2021
- Ministry for Health, and Ministry for Education and Vocational Education, Spain
  https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/portada.html
- Ministry for National Education, France
  https://www.education.gouv.fr/
- Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Iceland
  https://www.government.is/ministries/ministry-of-education-science-and-culture/
- National Board of Health, Ministry of Children and Education, Denmark
  https://www.uvm.dk/aktuelt/nyheder/uvm/2020/jul/200701-regler-og-retningslinjer-fra-den-1--august-er-nu-udstedt-i-ny-bekendtgoerelse
  https://www.sst.dk/da/Udgivelser/2020/Genaabning-af-skoler
- Federal Ministry of Health, Robert Koch Institut, Germany
  https://www.zusammengegencorona.de/en/
  https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/EpidBull/Archiv/2020/19/Art_03.html?nn=13490888
- Public Health Agency of Sweden
  https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/the-public-health-agency-of-sweden/

2.1.2 Additional countries and websites for rapid review of public health guidance for protective measures for vulnerable groups from COVID-19

For the rapid review of public health guidance for protective measures for vulnerable groups from COVID-19, the following websites are included in this review in addition to the websites outlined in section 2.1:

- Robert Koch Institute, Germany

https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/nCoV_node.html
- Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare
  https://thl.fi/en/web/infectious-diseases-and-vaccinations/what-s-new/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-updates
- Public Health Agency of Sweden
  https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/the-public-health-agency-of-sweden/
- Welsh Government
  https://gov.wales/coronavirus

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 or 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 Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

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
  - o 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.
- identification and management of symptoms in children and young people attending school in the context of COVID-19
  - o This review will consider eight distinct areas of guidance:
    1. health screening protocols
    2. symptoms requiring children and young people to stay at home
    3. symptoms in clinically vulnerable children and young people
    4. isolation protocols
    5. return to school after illness protocols
    6. school and or classroom closure protocols
    7. centralised reporting requirements for symptoms and or absence in students
    8. related risk-based systems or frameworks.