Guideline Document
Supplementary Note

Ref: SN:003:01	RE: For the Management of Suspected COVID-19 Cases		
Issue date:	June 2020	**Revised Date:**	November 2020
Author(s):	National Health and Safety Function		
Note:	This supplementary note has been developed to support local management in developing the procedure to be followed in the event that an employee, visitor, contractor or other person becomes symptomatic while at work or in the workplace as required by the COVID-19 Response Plan. The information provided is for general guidance only. Should you require more specific advice please contact the Health & Safety Help Desk on https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/benefits-services/health-and-safety/. The management of any occupational safety and health issue(s) rest with local management.		

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a critical step in protecting employees, visitors, contractors and others at the workplace. To protect employees and others the following must be adhered to:

Section 1   Planning

1. Senior Manager (Site/Service Manager) to ensure that a local protocol is in place for responding to a suspect case(s)
2. Senior Manager to identify a COVID-19 Response Manager / Response Team / Case Manager with responsibility for responding to suspect case(s)
3. Senior Manager in conjunction with COVID-19 Response Manager to Identify a designated isolation room(s) with a door(s) capable of closing
4. Designated isolation room(s) must:
   - Be easily accessible (in terms of route and access)
   - Have adequate ventilation[1]
   - Have a chair for the unwell individual
   - Have an appropriate supply of tissues, hand sanitiser, disinfectant, PPE, gloves, and surgical masks
   - Have waste receptacles with bin liners
5. Restrict the number of personnel entering isolation room(s)[2]
6. Develop a local cleaning procedure in line with HPSC/ HSE Interim Infection Prevention and Control Precautions for Possible or Confirmed COVID-19 in a Pandemic Setting

---

[1] Ideally the room would have an opening outside window to allow natural ventilation. It should not be an internal unventilated space.

[2] There should only be one person in isolation in the room at any one time. Should there be a likelihood of more than one person developing symptoms at any one time (e.g. on larger hospital sites) it may be necessary to identify more than one room

7. Maintain a contact log to enable contact tracing and provide any advice and assistance if requested by the Department of Public Health (see: https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/coronavirus/safety-in-the-workplace/managing-employees-return-to-work-safely1.html)

8. Communicate the arrangements to all relevant personnel including the Lead Worker Representative(s), Safety Representatives (if applicable), staff, contractors and visitors

Section 2   Dealing with suspect case of COVID-19

If someone becomes unwell with symptoms such as:

- Fever, chills, sweating, malaise, aches
- Shortness of breath or new/worsening cough (dry or productive)
- Sore throat, loss of taste or smell
- Vomiting/Diarrhoea

The following should be adhered to:

1. Symptomatic person to notify their line manager, colleague or site contact immediately, advise if they are in a position to go home, contact their GP or local Occupational Health Department by telephone for a COVID-19 assessment and continue self-isolation at home

2. If the person cannot go home immediately, they should proceed to the designated isolation room, keeping at least a two meter distance from others at all times covering their mouth and nose with a facemask in line with HPSC guidance (See attached link here)

3. On entering the isolation room, the person should don a surgical mask

4. The door to the room should be closed where possible

5. The COVID – 19 Response Manager / Response Team / Case Manager facilitates the person remaining in isolation while they contact

    (a) An identified person (e.g. family member / member of support bubble) to collect them
       Or

    (b) Their local Occupational Health Department or GP for a COVID-19 assessment as appropriate

6. If necessary, arrange transport to hospital for medical assessment

Note: In line with the advice from Transport for Ireland public transport should not be used.

Note: Should Occupational First Aid be necessary, this should be administered by a qualified Occupational First-aider in accordance with the latest Public Health, HPSC, HSE and PHECC guidelines. Further information is available at:

https://www.phecit.ie/PHECC/Publications_and_Resources/Newsletters/Newsletter_Items/2020/PHECC_COVID_19_Advisory_v1.aspx and,
https://hse.drsteevenslibrary.ie/c.php?g=679077&p=4846207

Section 3   Cleaning

Once vacated, arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation room and work areas in line with local procedure.

For up to date information on the latest cleaning advice, please refer to: https://www.hpsc.ie/ and https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/disinfection-environments-covid-19

Section 4   Waste

Where clinical risk waste facilities are not available, all waste that has been in contact with the person, including used tissues, and masks if used, should be put in a normal waste bag, double bagging and kept for 72 hours, and disposed of through the normal waste stream.

Section 5   Post Incident Follow up

The COVID-19 Response Manager / Response Team / Case Manager to carry out an assessment of the incident to identify follow up actions.

All incidents must be reported and managed in line with HPSC/HSE *Interim Guidance for Coronavirus - Healthcare Worker Management by Occupational Health* and the HSE Incident Management Framework

Section 6   Outbreak Management

In the event an outbreak is declared i.e.
- two or more cases of laboratory confirmed COVID-19 infections are linked by time, place or person, regardless of whether the cases have symptoms or not;

OR
- one case of laboratory confirmed COVID-19 infection with or without symptoms, is linked by time, place or person to at least one additional case of illness with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection (at least one of the following: sudden onset new cough, fever, shortness of breath, loss of smell, loss of taste, distortion of taste). Full access to the definition of an outbreak can be found here: https://www.hpsc.ie/az/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/casedefinitions/

Please follow the guidance in the following link General Guide on Management of COVID-19 Outbreaks in the Workplace