



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta, Acmhainní Daonna

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí Sláinte
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**To: Chief Executive Officer
Each National Director
Each Assistant National Director HR
Each Assistant Chief Finance Officers
Each Hospital Group CEO
Each Hospital Group Director of HR
Each Chief Officer CHO
Each CHO Heads of HR
Each CEO Section 38 Agencies
Each HR Manager Section 38 Agencies
Each Employee Relations Manager
Each Group Director of Nursing & Midwifery
Each Group Director of Midwifery
Each Clinical Director**

From: Anne Marie Hoey, National Director of Human Resources

Date: 19th March, 2020

Re: HR Circular 014/2020: Social Distancing in the Health Sector

Dear Colleagues,

You will be aware of the requirements regarding social distancing recently introduced to support the delay phase of the COVID-19 outbreak (<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/protect-yourself.html>). Social distancing in addition to the other measures of hand washing and respiratory etiquette are essential and critical at this time to curb the spread of COVID-19.

It is important that staff implement social distancing in their workplaces including office, health centres and other administration settings. Therefore, managers of those working in such settings are immediately requested to put the following in place, in relation to the workplaces under their direction and control.

Where possible staff should be supported to work from home and the manager should ensure that staff have measurable, identifiable and a reportable quantity of work to



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complete on an on-going basis, and that regular reporting mechanisms are in place to support this.

Each senior manager should assess the requirement for staff to work from health sector locations due to the nature of their role in the current COVID-19 planning and operational management of health services, while balancing the need to ensure we act responsibly in relation to public health advice.

Where it is necessary for staff to work from health sector accommodation, it is necessary to carry out a risk assessment to determine current capacity to accommodate staff within the workplace while implementing social distancing. This may require reconfiguring the workspaces to accommodate the requirement for social distancing.

Where all staff cannot be accommodated in the current health sector location, you should consider redeploying staff to other appropriate buildings in the vicinity where such capacity exists.

It is essential that each manager ensures that any staff member who avails of working from home arrangements clearly understands that they may be recalled, and redeployed, during the period of the health sector's response to COVID-19 to a facility as urgent needs emerge. Managers should also ensure that any staff member who is offered working from home arrangements clearly understands that the working from home arrangement is for this COVID-19 period only and will not continue beyond the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Managers may also wish to consider arrangements where staff can alternate between home and work base while observing social distancing rules.

The co-operation, support and flexibility of staff over the past number of weeks has been extremely encouraging and must be acknowledged. Your continued support and collegiality over the coming weeks will ensure we emerge from this crisis as a stronger and even more resilient workforce.

Further information on working arrangements during COVID-19 is available in HR Circular 12/2020 HR Circular: COVID-19 FAQs for Public Service Employers in relation to working arrangements and leave associated with COVID-19 (including updates on changes from the containment to delay phase) 13th March 2020.

Yours sincerely



Anne Marie Hoey
National Director of Human Resources



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