



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta, Acmhainní Daonna
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí Sláinte
Ospidéal Dr. Steevens'
Baile Átha Cliath 8

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Health Service Executive
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MEMORANDUM

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 CHOs
Each Head of HR CHOs
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 Human Resources

Date: 14th January 2021

Re: HR Memo re Updated Occupational Health Guidance

Dear Colleagues

The purpose of this memo is to share the most up to date guidance on the following:

I. Updated Pregnancy Guidance

Following updated research, it is advised that pregnant HCWs will be defined as 'High Risk' or 'Very High Risk' HCWs, given the increased risk of exposure in healthcare.

Pregnant HCWs, with no other risk factors, should be deemed High Risk and therefore should work from home if possible. Clinical work, care work and working closely with others may be possible where testing of patients and staff, and provision of controls (e.g. screens, PPE) is effective in managing the risk. However pregnant HCWs cannot work with known COVID patients

Additional risk factors have been identified as categories for pregnant HCWs to be defined as 'Very High Risk':

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background
- Being obese (BMI >30)
- Pre-pregnancy co-morbidity, such as pre-existing diabetes and chronic hypertension
- Maternal age 35 or older
- Adverse social circumstances
- Pregnant HCWs with other underlying health conditions obstetric complications that could be negatively impacted by COVID 19 infection

Clinical assessment to categorise the risk can be carried out Occupational Health Services. A workplace pregnancy risk assessment should also be carried out by the line manager for all pregnant HCWs.

The full guidance can be found here [Guidance on Fitness for Work of Healthcare Workers in the Higher Risk Categories, including Pregnant Healthcare Workers](#)

II. Updated Derogation Guidance

Due to concern about impact of cases on staffing levels, and following advice from Pandemic Infection Control Team on the 5th Jan, close contacts of household cases can be derogated if staffing levels are **severely impacted and as a last resort, specifically in relation to the derogation of close contacts of household cases** As always, **only** senior management can make the decision to derogate a HCW and this must be based on a risk assessment. Testing prior to derogation is also required for all derogated HCWs and daily monitoring for symptoms must be in place. Local monitoring of the application of these guidelines will be required

The full guidance, including the draft risk assessment can be found here [Derogation for the Return to Work of Healthcare Workers \(HCW\) who are Essential for Critical Services](#)

Queries

Queries on the HSE Workplace Health & Wellbeing Unit's COVID-19 guideline documents may be referred to hr.wellbeing@hse.ie or the HCW helpline t: 1850 420 420

Yours sincerely



Anne Marie Hoey
National Director of Human Resources



Need information and advice on COVID-19 Go to www.hse.ie/coronavirus