



Guidance on provision of day services in the context of COVID-19/ respiratory viral infection

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Note: If you have any queries on this guidance please contact the AMRIC team at hcai.amrteam@hse.ie

Version	Date	Changes from previous version	Drafted by
1.7	01.08.2023	Introduction on page 4 paragraph 1 has been updated as follows - This advice specifically refers to those day centre services provided through HSE and HSE funded agencies but may be used by others providing similar services.	AMRIC
1.6	25.05.23	Removal of universal use of masks for people attending and healthcare workers in day care services (outside of periods of high levels of community transmission) Recommendation for use of masks and appropriate use of PPE as part of transmission based precautions Recommendation to facilitate mask use by those attending day care services if they wish to use them Amendments to detail on vaccination against COVID-19 and inclusion of link to NIAC guidance (for healthcare workers) Inclusion of link to National Clinical Guideline No. 30 – Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) for standard precautions and transmission based precautions Inclusion of link to Point of care risk assessment (PCRA). Change in terminology from COVID-19 to COVID-19/ respiratory viral infection. Removal of appendix Checklist for reopening day care services for older people Change in terminology from day services for older people to day services for people Revision of section 1 on preparedness plans prior to reopening Removal of section on respirator masks to reflect changes in other key guidance documents Update to section on protocols to guide transportation to and from centres Renaming of section on preparedness plans prior to reopening to Safe operation of day centres Removal of section of resumption of activities in the day centre with lowest practicable risk Amendments to the Appendix including the table on examples of group activities and IPC precautions Some editorial changes to the guidance document	AMRIC
1.5	10.03.2022	Updated content of vaccination Reference to control of infections other than COVID Removal of reference to risk assessment of unvaccinated staff Reference to early treatment for some patients	AMRIC
1.4	26.01.2022	Recommendation for use of respirator masks by healthcare workers when delivering care to service users Updated information related to vaccination	AMRIC
1.3	27.10.2021	Reference to risk of influenza and other respiratory viruses and the importance of influenza vaccination. Removal of reference to 8 out of 10 vaccinated since vaccination levels in older people are now generally much higher than this Use of term fully vaccinated instead of vaccine protection Reference to HSE policy on risk assessment of health and social care workers who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 Vehicle occupancy should align to current guidance for public transport More positive statement regarding resumption of additional activities Requirement that external service providers are fully vaccinated Added statement that there should be no differentiation between access of older persons using the services from their home or from a residential facility co-located with the day services. Simplification of table in Appendix 2	AMRIC
1.2	01.07.2021	Change to title and introduction to reflect that a number of services are now operating Change in terminology and definitions on vaccine protection Text added regarding movement of staff and about supporting patients to access GPs for testing - Cross reference to guidance on singing in the document “COVID-19 Guidance for Places of Worship”	AMRIC

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Guidance on provision of day services for in context of COVID -19/respiratory viral infection

Introduction

It is recognised that access to day services is important for the health and wellbeing of people who use them. The provision of COVID-19 vaccination to the general population ensures that these services can be provided safely. This advice specifically refers to those day centre services provided through HSE and HSE funded agencies but may be used by others providing similar services.

This is a stand alone document, which offers advice on the provision of day services in context of COVID -19/respiratory viral infection however it should be used in association with the “National Clinical Guideline No. 30 – Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)” <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a057e-infection-prevention-and-control-ipc/>

The aim of this guidance is to support provision of day care services recognising that there is an ongoing risk of COVID-19/respiratory viral infection transmission notwithstanding the success of the vaccination programme. Many of the measures outlined below will help to manage the risk of spread of all respiratory viruses. Influenza vaccination for service users and health and social care workers is also important in reducing the risk of spread of infection and reducing the risk of severe disease.

All healthcare workers should be aware that there are treatments for some service users with COVID-19. Early treatment may benefit people who are severely immunocompromised, people age 65 years or older who have not had vaccination and people aged 12 to 64 who have not taken vaccine and who have an underlying medical condition that places them at high risk of severe disease. The treatment must be given within five days of onset of symptoms. Day care services should seek to establish if any service user who attends the service belong to groups that might benefit from treatment. Service users in these groups should be encouraged to contact their GP promptly if they develop symptoms of COVID-19/ respiratory viral infection.

The guidance reflects:

1. Safe operation of day centres
2. Protocols to guide service user transportation to and from day centres
3. Management of potential cases/outbreaks where identified

General points

A high proportion of people have now been vaccinated against COVID-19 and have had booster vaccination. Influenza vaccination has also been offered to certain categories of people.

Service users who have declined vaccination should **not be** denied access to essential day care services on the basis that they are not vaccinated. They should be informed that attending day care services without being vaccinated against COVID-19 and influenza places them at increased risk of severe disease. There should be no differentiation between access of service users using the day services from their home or from a residential facility co-located with the day service centre.

Access to day care services is not based on vaccination status of other members of the service user's household.

Risk assessment for each setting will need to take account of number of service users, layout and size of physical space, and opportunities for improved ventilation. The risk assessment should include components such as:

1. Number of service users
2. Number of service users up to date with vaccination including booster
3. Number of staff up to date with vaccination including booster
4. Size and layout – bigger open space / larger area is better
5. Ventilation – windows open better insofar as practical taking account of comfort and weather
6. Activities that can take place outdoors where this is feasible
7. Public health guidance at time of the risk assessment and in light of whether there are high levels of circulating respiratory virus in the community served by the day service

1. Safe operation of day centres

In regards to the safe operation of day centres the following should be attended to:

1. A staff lead for control of infection including COVID-19/respiratory viral infection should be nominated in each centre
2. Service users should be advised not to attend if they have COVID-19/respiratory viral infection symptoms
3. Vaccination against SARS-CoV-2 (including booster vaccination) reduces the risk of transmission in addition to reducing severity of disease in those vaccinated. This serves to emphasise the importance of vaccination, including booster vaccination, of healthcare workers not only to protect themselves but also in protecting the people that they care for

4. Current recommendations for vaccination and booster vaccination are available here: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/guidelines/> Chapter 5a of NIAC Immunisation Guidance NIAC Immunisation Guidelines. Chapter 05 a. COVID-19 | Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (preservica.com)
5. Operational plans should follow the Guidance for COVID-19 on the following website: www.hpsc.ie. This includes measures related to selection of PPE as per risk assessment, physical distancing, cleaning protocols and use of public / shared transportation to and from the day service facility
6. Day services should be guided by an informed risk assessment that includes the following:
 - a) Ability of the centre to provide core services with physical distancing minimum of 1m (in a controlled space). Although physical distance is no longer required in many other settings at present it is still recommended in healthcare settings which includes day care services. It must be accepted that some service users have conditions that make it impractical to keep them 1m or more from other service users at all times. This must be managed in a pragmatic way, with a goal of avoiding crowding of space
 - b) Ability of the centre to provide services in outdoor or well-ventilated spaces when this is appropriate and feasible. Indoor ventilation should be adequate for the duration of the activity taking account of comfort and weather. The goal is a gentle circulation of fresh air
 - c) Ongoing adherence to infection prevention and control measures by all staff including hand hygiene, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) as required by standard precautions and point of care risk assessment (PCRA). It is important to ensure that any staff who have COVID-19/respiratory viral infection symptoms, should be advised to remain away from work or go home from work if they develop symptoms
 - d) There need not be separation of individuals based on whether they normally reside at home or within a co-located residential facility
 - e) Service users are not required to wear masks, in line with Public Health recommendations, however they may choose to wear masks if they wish
 - f) Normal activities including dancing, exercise classes, art, communal dining should be in place to promote health and wellbeing. Physical distancing (1m) should be maintained in so far as is practical
 - g) Where external providers are supporting care / social activities in the centre they should be up to date with vaccination including booster vaccination. They must in all cases comply with public health requirements and IPC guidance

Updated Guidance on the use of masks by Healthcare workers:

- Surgical masks or respirator masks should be worn by those caring for service users who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19

- Surgical masks or respirator masks should also be worn in settings where the infection prevention and control team advice indicates that there is a high risk that service users with unsuspected COVID-19 are likely to be present
- Healthcare workers in low-risk settings, when caring for those who do not have suspected or confirmed COVID-19, can revert to standard precautions, which includes risk assessment for whether wearing a surgical mask or other PPE is required
- Recognising that health care workers' preferences are an important consideration, surgical and respirator masks should continue to be available to healthcare workers in all settings, although they are not required for most healthcare interactions outside of periods of increased community transmission of respiratory viral infections
- Care staff who live and work with service users in health and social care settings should, when caring for those who do not have suspected or confirmed COVID-19, revert to standard precautions and risk assessment as to whether wearing a surgical mask is required
- Surgical masks are no longer required to be worn for all healthcare interactions.
- HCWs in non-clinical settings where service users are not cared for are not required to wear a surgical mask, although may choose to do so
- PPE should be readily available in day care services, as per standard and transmission based precautions

As part of standard precautions, it is the responsibility of every HCW to undertake a point of care risk assessment prior to performing a clinical care task; this will inform the level of IPC precautions needed, including the choice of appropriate PPE.

The following links provide supportive materials for services.

Information on PCRA, and how to use a PCRA

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/microbiologyantimicrobialresistance/infectioncontrolandhai/posters/>

AND

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/our-priority-programmes/hcai/resources/general/how-to-use-a-point-of-care-risk-assessment-pcra-for-infection-prevention-and-control-copy.pdf>

Details on transmission-based precautions refer to the relevant section in the National Clinical Guideline No. 30 – Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) which is available at the following link <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a057e-infection-prevention-and-control-ipc/>

Educational videos are available on www.hpsc.ie at:

<https://www.hpsc.ie/az/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/videoresourcesforipc/>

A suite of resources including posters, videos and webinars relating to the safe donning and doffing of PPE is accessible at <https://www.hpsc.ie/az/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/ppe/>

The Health and Safety Authority indicates that where a risk assessment -identifies that workers need to use a close-fitting respirator mask for their protection that every effort should be made to comply with the requirement for fit testing of the workers, as far as is reasonably practicable. When fit testing of all staff is not immediately possible, then fit testing should be prioritised for those at greatest risk.

Current recommendations for the use of PPE, as required is available at :

<https://www.hpsc.ie/az/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/ppe/Current%20recommendations%20for%20the%20use%20of%20PPE.pdf>

2. Protocols to guide transportation to and from centres

Where transport is provided by bus / van the following protocols should be observed:

1. Where reasonably practical to do so service users to use own transport/transport with family member
2. Briefly check for symptoms of COVID-19/viral respiratory tract infection before each person boards the vehicle
3. Continued adherence with IPC measures for hand hygiene
4. Vehicle occupancy should be in line with current guidance for public transport (full capacity)
5. Vehicles should be ventilated during transport in so far as practical in the context of comfort and weather and should ventilated between trips
6. Cleaning protocols in line with public health policy <https://www.hpsc.ie/az/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/cleaningguidance/Cleaning%20guidance%20for%20non%20healthcare%20settings.pdf>
7. For details on cleaning and disinfection refer to the relevant section in the National Clinical Guideline No. 30 –Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Staff assisting with transportation, as for all staff, should be up to date with vaccination against COVID-19, including booster vaccination and influenza when eligible
8. The service should have a plan in place to transport home a service user who develops symptoms of COVID-19/viral respiratory tract infection promptly
9. Service should have capacity to sample service users who are found to be symptomatic, or to support the person in liaising with their GP for testing.

Note, as above, the importance of prompt testing of service users who may be eligible for the new treatments.

3. Management of outbreaks

1. Where the COVID-19 lead has been notified of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or influenza likely to have been acquired in the centre they should link in with the local public health team. A single case in a staff member or a service user does not require suspension of services unless recommended by public health.
2. Local decisions guided by public health should inform service continuity or need to suspend services while further testing and tracing occur.

Appendix 1 – Examples of Group activities and IPC Precautions

Items/activity	Comment
Chair aerobics yoga	Clean chairs between each session with detergent wipes
Ball games	Hand hygiene before and after
Bingo	Individual answer sheets & markers
Dancing	Hand hygiene before and after
Card games e.g. bridge	Hand hygiene before and after
Computer skills	Cover keyboard and clean after use
Sing songs	Maintain as much distance and ventilation as practical and keep groups small
Knitting	Each person uses their own equipment
Art	Each person uses own equipment or equipment cleaned between users
Flower arranging	Hand hygiene before and after
Table quiz	Hand hygiene before and after
Jigsaws	Hand hygiene before and after
Pottery	Clean potter's wheel between users
Films	Physical distancing
Wii Keep fit	Clean hand set and controls between service users

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