



**Health  
Information  
and Quality  
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis  
agus Cálíocht Sláinte

# **Protocol for the identification and review of public policy responses to easing COVID-19 restrictions**

**27 May 2020**

<b>Version history</b>		
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of change</b>
v1.0	21 Apr 2020	Protocol for the identification and review of public policy responses to COVID-19 drafted.
v2.0	27 May 2020	Protocol updated to reflect a change in the focus from restrictive measures to the easing of restrictions in a number of key countries.

## **1. Purpose and Aim**

The purpose of this protocol is to outline the process by which the health technology assessment (HTA) team will conduct a review of international public policy responses to easing restrictions introduced to limit the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

The output from this exercise was initially provided twice weekly to the relevant individuals, beginning 27 March 2020. The output from the updated protocol (detailed here) will be provided weekly, beginning 27 May 2020. The aim of the review is to inform public policy decision makers in Ireland of the international response to easing COVID-19 restrictions.

## **2. 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 weekly. These are listed below and described in more detail in sections 2.1-2.3.

- 1.** Search relevant governmental resources.
- 2.** Review identified relevant information related to the public policy responses to easing COVID-19 restrictions and their relevance to the Irish situation.
- 3.** Summarise the information and circulate to the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE).

### **2.1 Search of relevant international resources**

We will examine the steps being taken in a number of key countries in Europe (Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy,

Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK) and elsewhere (China, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Singapore, and South Korea) to lift restrictions initially introduced to limit the spread of COVID-19. Government resources will be searched in the first instance. These include government websites, policy briefs, and press releases. The government sources are detailed in Appendix 1. Where information on policy responses cannot be extracted due to language barriers, a lack of information, or a lack of public policy response to the virus, this will be documented. We will adapt the scope of our search to include other countries should these become of interest to the relevant parties.

## **2.2 Review identified relevant information related to the public policy responses to COVID-19 and their relevance to the Irish situation**

All identified public policy measures that involve an easing of restrictions initially introduced to limit the spread of COVID-19 will be reviewed. Information specific to the initial research question on public policy measures, in particular, restrictive public policy measures, will be extracted.<sup>(1)</sup> This includes information on the easing of restrictions associated with travel, social or mass gatherings, school and business activities, among other measures/themes. Information on the triggers for the de-escalation of restrictions will be also be extracted, where possible. The exact government source of information will be recorded and detailed in the summary report.

As additional research questions may arise during the course of the review, the information that will need to be extracted may change. However, the protocol for searching government websites and extracting information from government resources will remain the same, as detailed in this protocol.

## **2.3 Summarise the information**

A summary of the public policy responses to easing COVID-19 restrictions will be documented and sent to the relevant parties. The summary report will be provided in portable document format (PDF).

The review will be updated weekly, beginning 27 May 2020, with each iteration provided to the relevant parties by close of business every Wednesday.

## **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.

## **Appendix 1- List of sources**

### **List of government resources**

- Austria  
<https://metropole.at/coronavirus-updates-in-english/>
- Belgium  
<https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/news/nsc-13-05/>
- Czech Republic  
<https://www.vlada.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/measures-adopted-by-the-czech-government-against-coronavirus-180545/>
- China  
<https://www.gov.cn/english/>
- Denmark  
<https://politi.dk/en/coronavirus-in-denmark/controlled-reopening-of-denmark>
- Finland  
<https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/information-on-coronavirus>
- France  
<https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus>
- Germany  
<https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en>
- Hong Kong  
[https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/social\\_distancing-faq.html#FAQ20](https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/social_distancing-faq.html#FAQ20)  
<https://hongkongfp.com/2020/05/19/breaking-coronavirus-hong-kong-extends-social-distancing-rules-and-public-gathering-restriction/>
- Ireland  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/news/58bc8b-taoiseach-announces-roadmap-for-reopening-society-and-business-and-u/>
- Italy  
<http://www.salute.gov.it/portale/nuovocoronavirus/dettaglioFaqNuovoCoronavirus.jsp?lingua=english&id=230#11>
- Netherlands  
<https://www.government.nl/topics/coronavirus-covid-19/tackling-new-coronavirus-in-the-netherlands/changes-to-measures-from-11-may>
- New Zealand  
<https://covid19.govt.nz/latest-updates/>
- Norway  
<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/new-guidance-on-holiday-and-leisure-travel/id2702827/>
- Portugal  
<https://www.visitportugal.com/en/node/421175>

- South Korea  
<http://ncov.mohw.go.kr/tcmBoardList.do?brdId=3&brdGubun=>
- Singapore  
<https://www.gov.sg/article/covid-19-updates-and-announcements>  
<https://www.gov.sg/article/ending-circuit-breaker-phased-approach-to-resuming-activities-safely>
- Spain  
<https://english.elpais.com/news/society/>
- Sweden  
<https://www.government.se/government-policy/the-governments-work-in-response-to-the-virus-responsible-for-covid-19/>
- Switzerland  
[https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/das-bag/aktuell/medienmitteilungen.html?dyn\\_startDate=01.01.2016](https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/das-bag/aktuell/medienmitteilungen.html?dyn_startDate=01.01.2016)
- UK  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

## **List of other websites**

- World Health Organization (WHO)  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen>
- 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](https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/search?s=&sort_by=field_ct_publication_date&sort_order=DESC&f%5B0%5D=diseases%3A2942)
- International Monetary fund  
<https://www.imf.org/en/News>

## References

1. Health Information and Quality Authority. Protocol for the identification and review of public policy responses to COVID-19. Dublin, Ireland: HIQA; 21 April 2020 [Available from: <https://www.hiqa.ie/sites/default/files/2020-04/Protocol-to-identify-public-policy-responses-to-COVID-19.pdf> Accessed: 27 May 2020].

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**For further information please contact:**

**Health Information and Quality Authority**

**George's Court**

**George's Lane**

**Smithfield**

**Dublin 7**

**D07 E98Y**

**+353 (0)1 8147400**

**[info@hiqa.ie](mailto:info@hiqa.ie)**

**[www.hiqa.ie](http://www.hiqa.ie)**

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