

Important information from the Chief Inspector of Social Services re.COVID-19

Infection Prevention and Control Hub

Communique no. 6

Friday, 3rd April: HIQA and the Chief Inspector continue to closely monitor the evolving COVID-19 situation in the best interests of people using services.

I am aware that providers and staff in designated centres and children's residential services are working extremely hard to provide safe care to residents and children in these exceptionally challenging times. My priority remains the safety and wellbeing of people using services and to support providers and staff in designated centres and children's residential centres.

In order to continue to support you and your staff during this public health emergency, I wish to advise you of the establishment of an Infection Prevention and Control Hub for designated centres and children's residential centres in HIQA.

The aim of the HIQA Infection Prevention and Control Hub is to provide a direct line of contact for providers and staff of social care services to offer guidance and support as you deal with COVID-19 infection control issues.

This Hub will work closely with the HSE and Tusla and, when appropriate, will escalate high-risk centres for their attention.

Infection Prevention and Control Hub services

The HIQA infection control hub will provide support and guidance on:

- outbreak preparedness
- outbreak management advice to include:
 - resident placement
 - cohorting and special measures in centres where isolation is not possible
 - staff cohorting in the management of suspected and infected cases
 - transmission-based precautions
 - standard precautions.

The Infection Prevention and Control Hub will also offer support to you and your staff in understanding HSE advice and how you can apply this advice to your specific centres. General infection control queries may also be directed to this service.

This Hub does not replace your obligation to notify Public Health of any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Not in scope

Please be advised that the following is not currently within the scope of the Hub:

- occupational health advice
- public health advice - this will be referred to public health
- medical management of staff and COVID-19 infected residents.

General regulatory queries will be managed by case holding inspectors

Contact details

The HIQA Infection Prevention and Control Hub will be staffed by inspectors with experience and expertise in infection control, delivering services and or regulating designated centres. You can contact the team in one of the following ways:

- by telephone on **1800 220 000**
- by email at DCIPCSupport@hiqa.ie.

Hours of business

Initially, the Hub will be available from Monday to Friday 9am- 5pm, however we will keep this under review and **will adapt these hours depending on demand.**

I hope this service will be of benefit to you and your staff. I am also confident that by working together, we can support and protect vulnerable adults and children living in residential centres.

Mary Dunnion



Chief Inspector of Social Services