



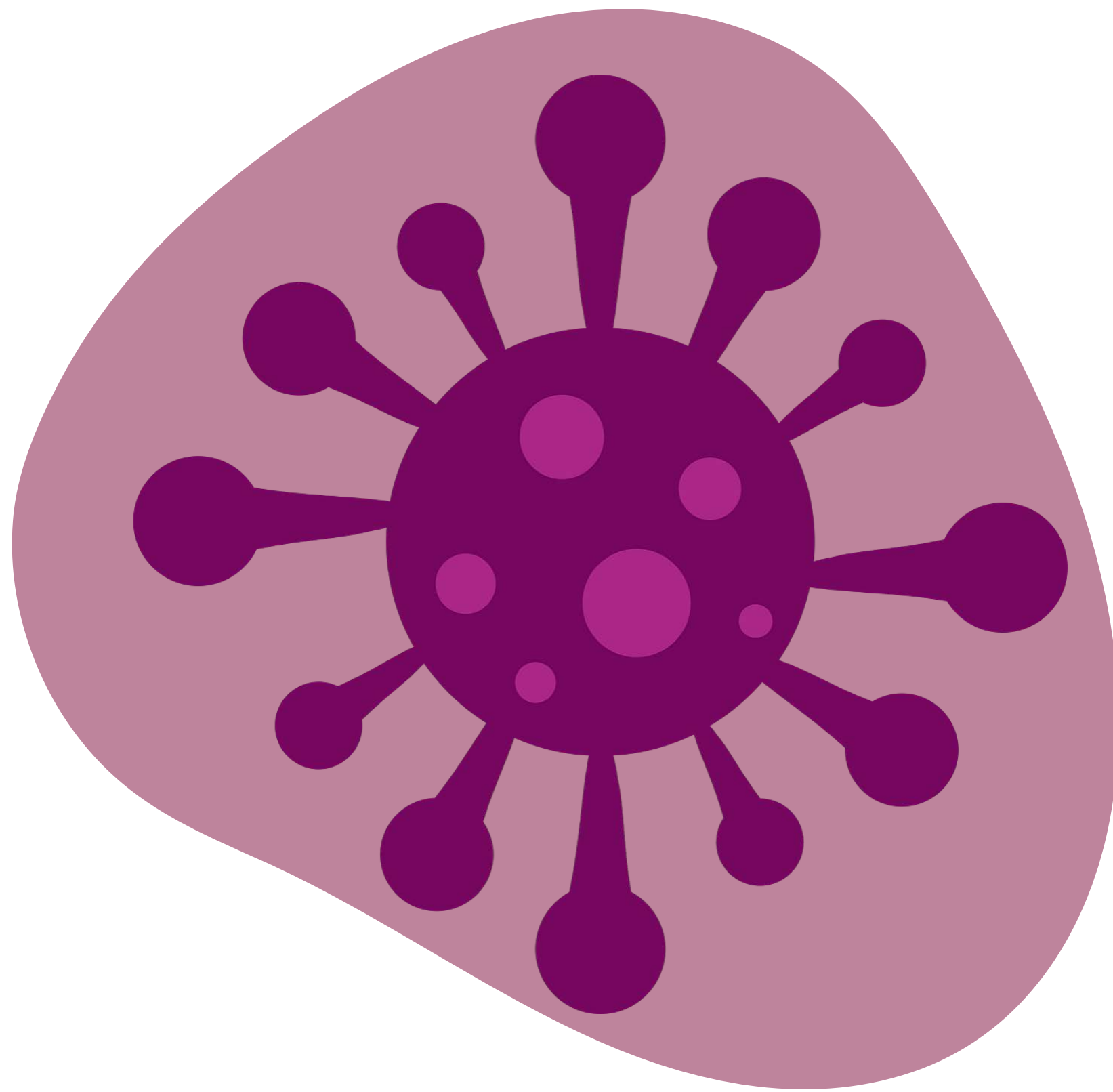
**Health
Information
and Quality
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte



A ROUND UP OF OUR
**REPORTS,
REVIEWS AND
ADVICE**

Submitted to support the National Public Health
Emergency Team to inform its work in March 2021



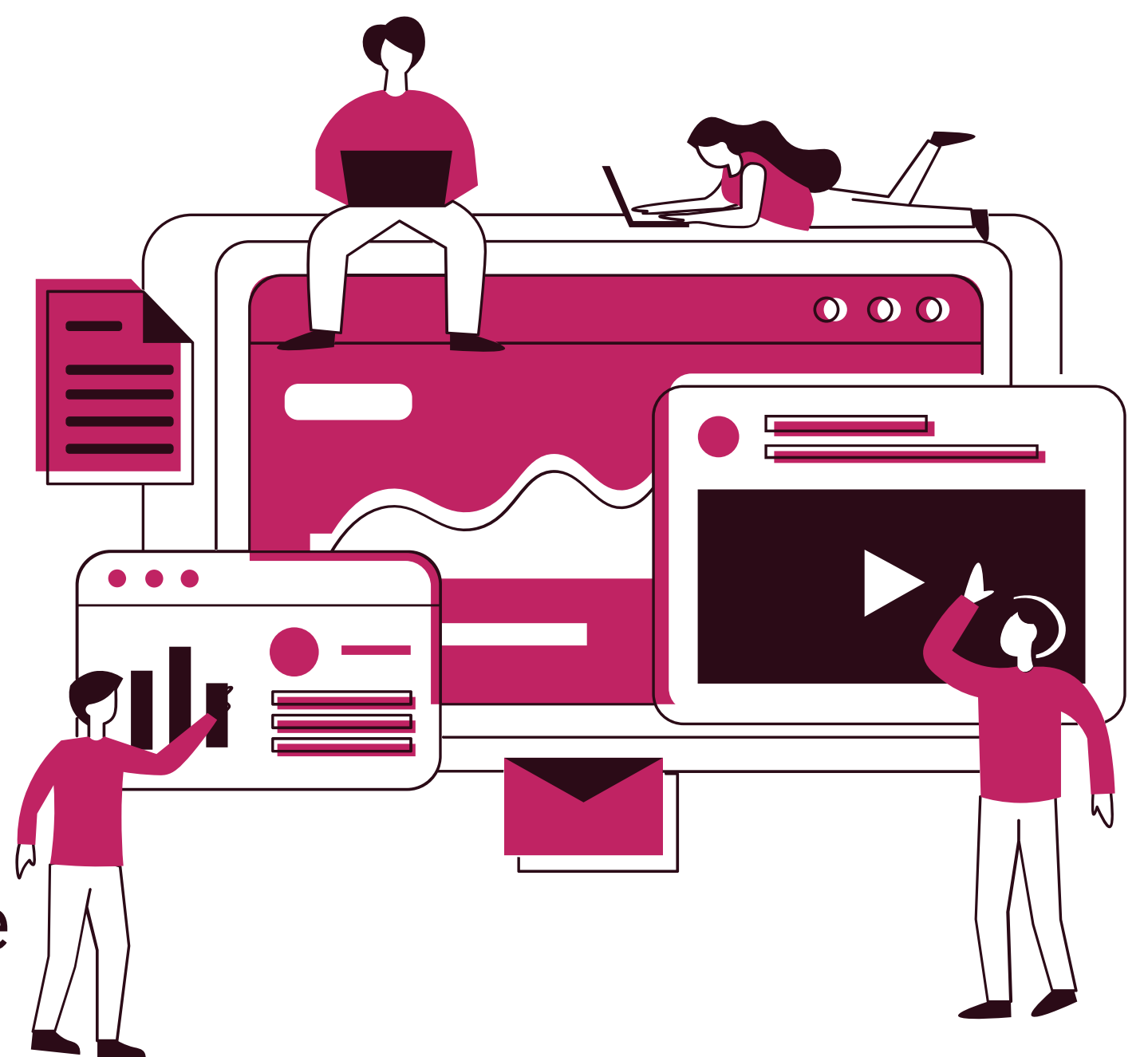


DATA COVID-19 DATABASE

Once a week we update our database of public health guidance on COVID-19 to include latest guidance from governments, public health organisations and NGOs.

The database is mostly used by relevant stakeholders in the Health Protection Surveillance Centre, the National Public Health Emergency Team, the Department of Health, and Health Service Executive.

However, it is accessible and available on our website for everyone and if you are interested in finding out more about how other countries are reacting to COVID-19, we encourage you to use it.





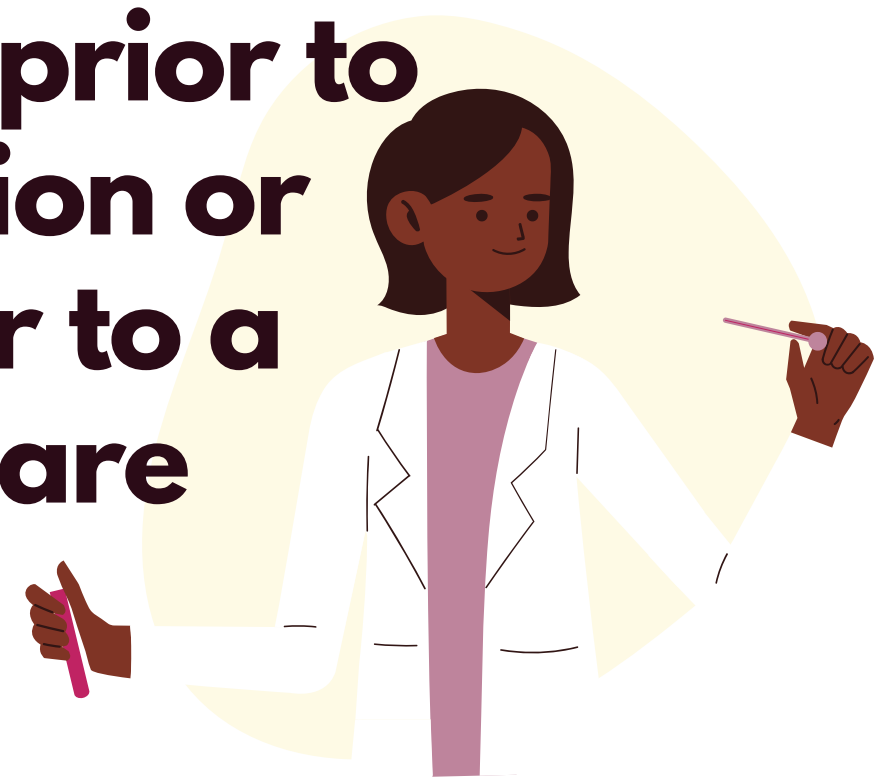
Duration of immunity

We have completed our fifth review into the duration of immunity following a SARS-CoV-2 infection.

We found that immunity post-infection is estimated to last **six months** rather than the earlier estimate of **12 weeks**.

We advised NPHEt that the **risk of reinfection** with SARS-CoV-2 during that period is **very low** and no evidence was found to suggest that immunity declines over this period.

The advice has wide implications for a number of policy areas including exemption from close contact status, serial testing in selected work settings and testing prior to admission or transfer to a healthcare facility.



To note...

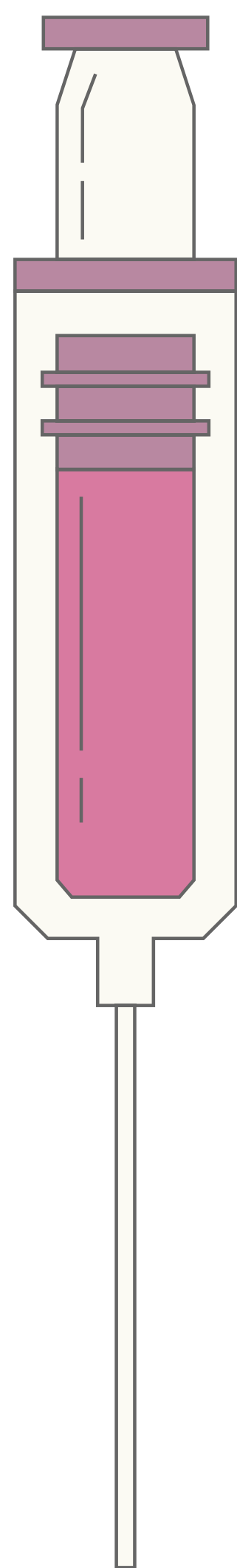
The five large cohort studies examined were conducted prior to December 2020. Therefore, they do not consider or account for the new variants or vaccinated populations.



Vaccine Strategy roll-out

We reviewed the appropriateness of inclusion of 12 populations within group 9 of Ireland's vaccine roll-out strategy, based on their risk of infection and severe disease.

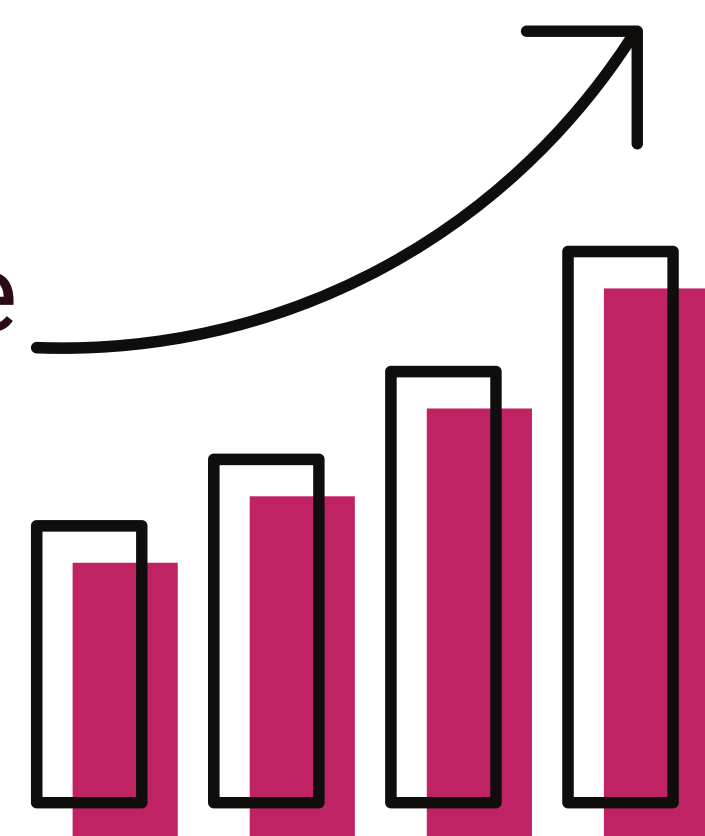
Group 9 covers those those aged 18-64 years living or working in crowded accommodation, where self-isolation and social distancing are difficult to maintain.



We found that the risk of severe disease was higher in the Traveller and Roma communities and among people who are homeless, while Travellers were also found to be at increased risk of infection compared with the general population.

Within all the groups identified...

An elevated risk of infection and or risk of severe disease relative to the general population was present and when data was limited or unavailable, it was noted that they would have a plausible elevated risk.



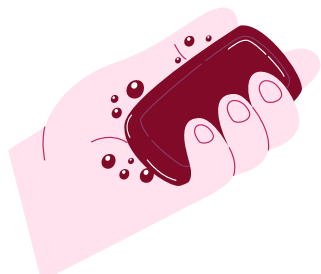
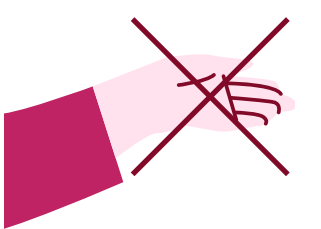


PROTECTIVE MEASURES FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

We updated our review of public health guidance on COVID-19 issued to protect vulnerable groups who may be at risk of severe illness twice in March.

Our review summarises the variety of protective measures being taken to protect vulnerable groups who are at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 across 14 countries.

Advice for vulnerable groups typically includes stay at home, practice hand hygiene, physical distancing and avoid contact with others.



Our latest included a change of high risk grouping definitions from Norway, England, Ireland, Scotland, Sweden and Switzerland. It also included updated advice for those in high groups from Germany and England and new evidence has been reported in Scotland

We have updated this report

44

times



Limit the spread

We updated our international review of public health measures and strategies to limit the spread of COVID-19.

We found that most of the countries we reviewed had increasing case numbers per 100,000 population. The only countries with **decreasing case numbers** over the previous seven days to 14 March 2021 were **Czechia, Ireland, Israel, Portugal and the UK.**

Many of the countries have developed and published guidelines for living with COVID-19 and some now include plans for the gradual easing of restrictions.

In this update, we reviewed guidance from...

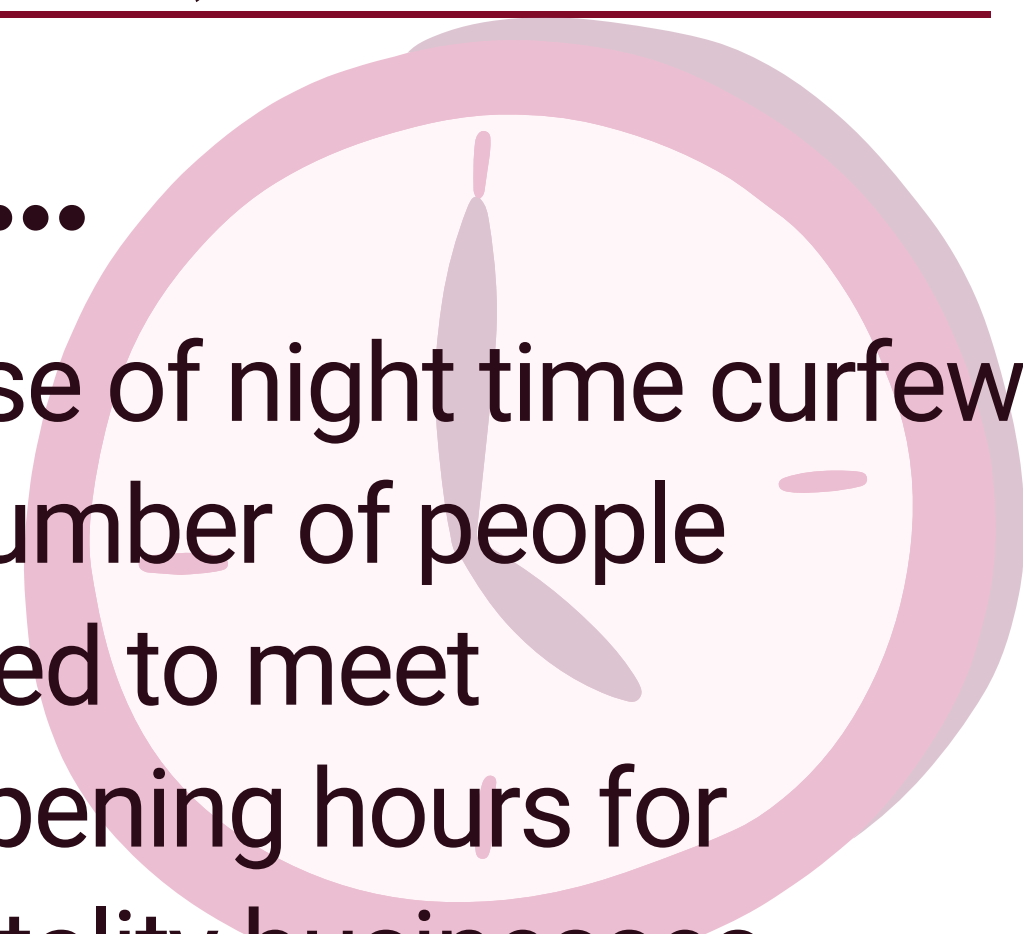
- Austria
- Belgium
- Czechia
- Denmark
- France
- Germany
- Ireland
- Italy
- Israel
- UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales)
- Netherlands
- Portugal
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland



The types of restrictions applied are very similar across the board but vary in detail.

Such as...

- the use of night time curfews
- the number of people allowed to meet
- the opening hours for hospitality businesses.





Minimum age for mask wearing

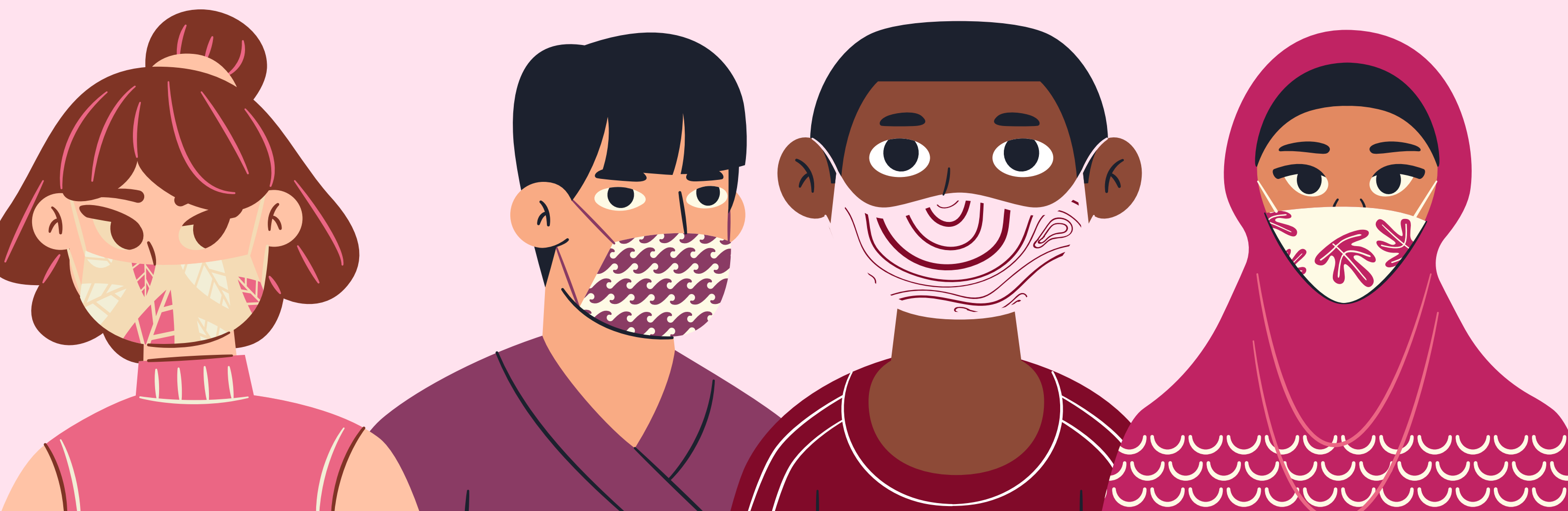
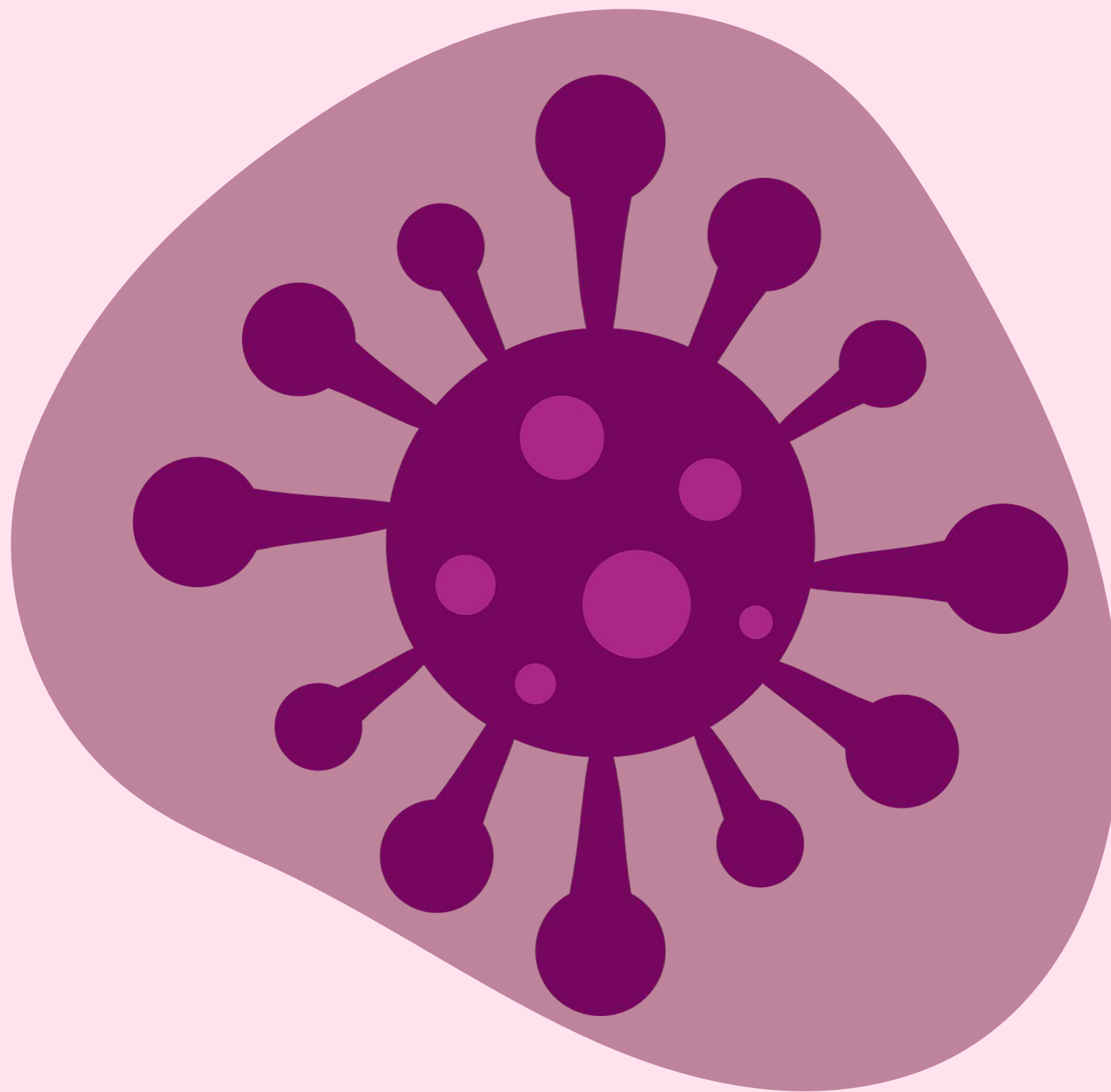
We advised NPHET that no change was necessary to the current minimum age of mask wearing in schools, as the measures being used in schools so far have successfully mitigated the spread of SARS-CoV-2.

However, as there is growing uncertainty regarding the impact of the increased transmissibility of the B.1.1.7 variant, we will continue to update and review this advice as new evidence becomes available.

"It is important that schools remain open to support children's educational, social, and emotional development. The best way to ensure that schools remain a low-risk environment is by the continued use of a combination of public health measures"

Dr Máirín Ryan, HIQA's Deputy CEO and Director of Health Technology Assessment







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