

From: HQ

Date: Wednesday 13 May 2020 at 16:46

To: HQ

Subject: VetALERT 10k/20 - COVID-19 Update 13th May 2020 - Beyond COVID-19: The Journey to the "New Normal"

Dear Veterinary Ireland Member,

It is hoped that you are keeping safe and well during these turbulent times.

A number of changes are to take place over the coming weeks and months, in relation to Ireland's journey to return towards some form of normality, albeit the now oft-quoted "**New Normal**".

While Veterinary Practices have been deemed to be "*essential services*" under the COVID-19 regulations, it is still critical that the advice from the [GOV.IE](#), [HSE.IE](#), [HPSC.ie](#) and other agencies, including the Health & Safety Authority ([HSA.ie](#)) and National Standards Authority Ireland ([NSAI.ie](#)), is observed, undertaken and maintained.

This COVID-19 Update contains links to advice and information from these Government agencies, as well as initial details of new support measures for businesses affected by COVID-19.

Further information will be forwarded to Veterinary Ireland Members, as it becomes available.

If any members have specific queries which Veterinary Ireland Headquarters may be able to assist with, either directly or through third party advice, then please email HQ@vetireland.ie.

Keep safe, keep well,

God bless,

Peter Bishton
Deputy Chief Executive

Veterinary Ireland COVID-19 Update – 13th May 2020

SUMMARY:

- **Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business:** Click [HERE](#)
- **Overview of Reopening Phases:** Click [HERE](#)
- **DBEI Website on Financial Advice and Schemes:** Click [HERE](#)
- **Revenue.ie - COVID-19 Advice and Measures:** Click [HERE](#)
- **National Return to Work Safely Protocol:** Click [HERE](#)

- **Health & Safety Authority (HSA) Advice:** Click [HERE](#)
- **NSAI Guidance for Businesses:** Click [HERE](#)
- **Veterinary Ireland - Living with COVID-19 Document** Click [HERE](#)
- **Veterinary Ireland COVID-19 Website:** Click [HERE](#)
- **VCI - Updated (5.5.20) Guidance:** Click [HERE](#)

[Public Health Measures in Place until 18th May 2020 to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19](#)

Further to the Taoiseach’s address to the Nation on 1st May 2020, the Public Health measures previously imposed are to remain in place until 18th May 2020, with two exceptions.

The changes made from **5th May 2020** are that:

- Irish citizens can go up to 5 kilometres from their home to exercise, and
- those who are “cocooning” can leave their homes for exercise, so long as they avoid all contact with other people.

All other measures remain in place, and further details on all current measures in place to can be found [HERE](#).

The Government continues to urge everyone to stay in their home wherever possible until Monday 18th May. Staying at home is the best way to minimise the risk of COVID-19 to your friends, families and communities.

The Government has also advised that the measures in place until 18th May 2020 have been reflected in a Statutory Instrument ([S.I. No. 153 of 2020 - Health Act 1947 \(Section 31A – Temporary Restrictions\) \(Covid-19\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 2\) Regulations 2020](#)) and will be enforced by the Garda Síochána.

[Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business](#)

The Roadmap announced by the Taoiseach on 1st May 2020 provides a framework of measures to be implemented over a set of three-week phases between **18th May** and **10th August**, designed to phase in an element of normalisation of life in Ireland, while ensuring that the spread of COVID-19 is limited, both for the health and safety of citizens, as well as ensuring that the health services are not overwhelmed.

A copy of the [Roadmap Document](#), including charts showing the different aspects (social, work, etc) of each phases can be found [HERE](#).

(The chart relating specifically to **Economic Activity (Work)** and the reopening of businesses under each phase can be found on **page 10 of the document**.)

A copy of the “[Overview of Reopening Phases](#)” document can be found [HERE](#).

Fundamental to the Roadmap is the application of **a risk- based approach**, the maintenance of **adequate social distancing measures**, especially in the workplace, and the **limiting of incidence and duration of person-to-person contact**. The

Government has stressed that where at all possible, **remote working** should be maintained throughout the period of the Roadmap phases.

The Government has emphasised that the Roadmap is a “*living*” document that may change depending on the progression of the disease. As such the dates given for implementation of each phase are currently guidelines, and will be regularly reviewed by the relevant authorities.

The Roadmap - Preparing and Implementing

Unlike the earlier reactive changes brought about following the Taoiseach’s address on 27th March, which required individuals and organisations to react with speed and urgency, the phases of the Roadmap will require a much more measured and fluid approach, and veterinary practices should begin planning for the each phase well in advance, following a risk-based approach for each Phase, as per the Roadmap.

Employers are being advised by the Government to “*follow the latest public health advice and identify and implement suitable control measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection in the workplace. These public health measures should be communicated to all relevant employees and others at the place of work.*”

As has been the advice of Veterinary Ireland in previous COVID-19 documents sent to members, it is important to designate a specific person within the Veterinary Practice, and possibly a Deputy, to coordinate the practice’s planning and implementation of measures in relation to the return to more routine veterinary services. This does not mean that this one person has to undertake everything, as other members of the Veterinary Practice must be involved and informed about the measures to be put in place, but giving one person ultimate oversight of the planning and execution of such measures ensures that nothing can slip through the cracks.

There are a number of Government websites containing advice and guidance for all businesses, including Veterinary Practices, to move forward under the Roadmap.

[DBEI Webpage on Financial Advice and Schemes](#)

The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI) has compiled an extensive webpage designed to assist businesses affected by COVID-19, and to provide **practical steps, supports and guidance** to help businesses and organisations during the COVID-19 crisis, and on their journey following the **[Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business](#)**. To go direct to the DBEI’s webpage, click **[HERE](#)**.

As well as the practical elements of the advice, including talking to their accountant, their bank, insurers, the Revenue, and how to manage cashflow and implement practical aspects of social distancing at work, the webpage lists the extensive range of Government supports for working capital (e.g. **[Microfinance Ireland COVID-19 Business Loan](#)**; **[Sustaining Enterprise Fund for Small Enterprises](#)**, etc.), as well as the other Government supports and guidance (e.g. **[general grant supports](#)**; **[Business Continuity Vouchers](#)**; **[COVID-19 Business Financial Planning Grant](#)**, etc.)

As well as the information contained on the DBEI webpage, there is also a DBEI **Business Support Call Centre** for information on the government supports available to businesses and enterprises affected by COVID-19: **Tel: 01-631 2002**
Email: infobusinesssupport@dbei.gov.ie.

In addition, the DBEI has an **Occupational Health and Safety Helpline** (Tel: **1890 289 389** or **01-614 7000**; Email: wcu@hsa.ie).

The **National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI)** also has a **NSAI COVID-19 Helpline** for support in relation to improving COVID-19 related prevention and recovery measures in the workplace - **Tel: 01-807 3800**; Email: COVID-19-support@nsai.ie.

[Revenue.ie - COVID-19 Advice and Measures](#)

Revenue's **[COVID-19 Information and Advice for Taxpayers and Agents](#)** provides the latest information on Revenue services and tax and customs measures in place during the COVID-19 pandemic including information on tax returns, new 'warehousing' of deferred tax debts and interest suspension arrangements.

Revenue recently announced additional measures to support smaller enterprises experiencing cashflow and trading difficulties arising from the impacts of COVID-19 and provided further information in relation to the new scheme to 'warehouse' VAT and PAYE (Employer) debts associated with the COVID-19 crisis: For further information see the **[Revenue update on additional measures to support businesses and Debt Warehousing Scheme](#)**.

[National Return to Work Safely Protocol](#)

Especially important for businesses, the Government has devised a **National Return to Work Safely Protocol**, a COVID-19-specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers. A copy of the Return to Work Safely Protocol document can be downloaded **[HERE](#)**.

As the economy slowly begins to open up, following the restrictions made during the worst phase of the current pandemic, the **[Return to Work Safely Protocol](#)** sets out the steps and processes that businesses must take to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, in a format designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

[Veterinary Ireland - Living with COVID-19: Companion Animal Veterinary Practice 2020-2021](#)

Issued with **[VetALERT 21/20](#)** to both Veterinary Ireland Members and non-members, Veterinary Ireland has produced a document outlining how veterinary practices can safely provide both current COVID-19 restricted urgent / emergency-care-only services, as well as managing current capacities to recommence the performance of small numbers of outstanding preventative healthcare procedures in a safe and controlled manner. The document assesses that, provided the COVID-19 situation continues to stabilise, preventative healthcare procedures can safely recommence in a controlled and staged manner in the coming weeks.

Each veterinary practice must however assess their own situation, decide on their own policy and plan accordingly. The document provides advice on a staged return to performing preventative healthcare procedures, where companion animal veterinary practices carefully manage their preventative healthcare workload over the coming months to avoid a peak of demand. The advice includes a suggested text for client communications, for email, social media and websites.

The full document can be found on the [COVID-19 Section of the Veterinary Ireland website](#), or by clicking [HERE](#).

[Health & Safety Authority \(HSA\)](#)

The **Health & Safety Authority (HSA)**, which is vested with national responsibility for occupational health and safety in the workplace is the lead State body in the oversight and enforcement of the [COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol](#).

As well as COVID-19 advice on [GOV.IE](#), [HSE.IE](#) and [HPSC.ie](#), the HSA has a specific COVID-19 website, accessible [HERE](#).

Other useful advice and information can be found on the HSA website, or by going to the following links:

- The HPSC website with guidance for businesses can be found [HERE](#).
- A copy of the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) guidance for businesses can be found [HERE](#).

This document is a consolidation of the practical guidance currently available on how to manage business continuity during COVID-19, providing practical advice on aspects of social distancing, health protection measures, and actions in relation to COVID-19 cases amongst employees.

The following is an extract from the [HSA's website](#) on advice for employers and employees.

For workplaces where there is no occupational exposure health risk to Covid-19 such as retail, offices, construction, hospitality, transport etc., employers should take into account the most up to date official public health advice and guidance from the Department of Health and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre on how to mitigate the health risk including measures advised by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for work related travel. These public health measures should be communicated to employees and others at the workplace.

Employers are also reminded to review their occupational health and safety risk assessments to take account of any changes to the work activity that may arise following implementation of the public health recommendations.

The HSA also has an online tool for Health & Safety assessments, [BeSMART](#), which is available on the HSA Website. BeSMART can be found at <http://besmart.hsa.ie>, and it contains [a specific section for Veterinary Practices](#). When undertaking

“Return to Work Safely” risk assessments, Veterinary Practices may wish to utilise the BeSMART on-line tool along with the relevant Government advice, including the **HSA** advice and information, and the [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) document.

[Updated Guidance from Veterinary Council of Ireland \(VCI\)](#)

Further to the Taoiseach’s 1st May 2020 announcement on the easing of COVID-19 restrictions on a phased basis from 18th May 2020, the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) issued updated (5.5.20) guidance to all Registrants in relation to a return to routine matters, while maintaining current public health protocols. As well as information relating to a timeline of reported confirmed COVID-19 cases in animals, the VCI Guidance includes advice for veterinary premises on managing COVID-19 in practice, physical distancing protocols, and the staged return to performing routine and preventative healthcare procedures. A copy of the VCI’s Guidance of 5th May 2020 can be found [HERE](#).



Veterinary Ireland, 13 The Courtyard, Kilcarbery Park, Nangor Road, Dublin 22, D22 XH05.
Tel: (01) 4577976. Fax: (01) 4577998. E mail: HQ@vetireland.ie Web: www.veterinaryireland.ie

This e-mail is for intended recipients only - If you are not the intended recipient, you may not copy, distribute, or act on any information or instruction contained therein. If you receive this e-mail in error, please notify the sender immediately, delete the file and destroy any hard copies. Any views or opinions presented are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Veterinary Ireland unless otherwise specifically stated. Veterinary Ireland accepts no responsibility or liability for information used or action taken thereon due to incorrect receipt.



Please respect the environment and do not print this email unless you really must.