

From: HQ <HQ@vetireland.ie>

Date: Friday 23 October 2020 at 10:15

To: HQ <HQ@vetireland.ie>

Subject: VetALERT 53/20 - Veterinary Ireland COVID-19 Update - 22nd October 2020 - Move to Level 5 Measures

Dear Veterinary Ireland Member,

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

With the move to [Level 5 Measures](#), this COVID-19 Update contains links to advice and information from Irish Government agencies, the VCI, as well as from the Small Firms Association (SFA) on Government supports for businesses in relation to COVID-19.

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

All members are advised to continue to monitor official Government websites for essential COVID-19 information:

[GOV.IE](#)

[HSE.IE](#)

[HPSC.IE](#)

[HSA.IE](#)

as well as referring to the [COVID-19 page on the Veterinary Ireland Website](#) for all current and past COVID-19 advice.

If any members have specific COVID-19 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, God bless,

Peter Bishton
Deputy Chief Executive

Veterinary Ireland COVID-19 Update - 22nd October 2020

SUMMARY:

- **Veterinary Ireland COVID-19 Website:** Click [HERE](#)
 - **Level 5 Measures in place from 22nd October 2020:** Click [HERE](#)
 - **Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021 Plan:** Click [HERE](#)
 - **Level 5 Essential Services List (includes Veterinary):** Click [HERE](#)
 - **VetALERT 31/20 - Advice for Vet Practices:** Click [HERE](#)
 - **VCI - COVID-19 Guidance Note for Registrants:** Click [HERE](#)
 - **Return to Work Safely Protocol:** Click [HERE](#)
 - **Return to Work Safely Checklists:** Click [HERE](#)
 - **Health & Safety Authority (HSA) COVID-19 Advice:** Click [HERE](#)
 - **Revenue.ie - COVID-19 Advice and Measures:** Click [HERE](#)
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Level 5 Measures in Place from 22nd October 2020

As announced in the **18th October 2020 address by the Taoiseach Micheál Martin T.D.**, from midnight on **Wednesday 21st October 2020**, Ireland has moved to **Level 5** of the Government's **Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19**.

For **Level 5 Measures** Click **HERE**.

At Level 5, the public health risk means that all citizens will be asked to stay at home, **with certain exceptions**. There will be no gatherings other than small numbers at funerals and weddings. Also all citizens are advised to work from home unless providing an **essential service** for which a physical presence is required.

For the full list of **essential services under Level 5** Click **HERE**.

Veterinary, animal welfare and related services is listed at **Section 1 (i)** of the list as **an essential service under Level 5**.

While this means that Veterinary Practices can remain open, and veterinary practitioners can undertake their duties to animals and to their client owners, keeping up protective behaviours is as important as ever to prevent the spread of infection.

While much would be commonly applied by Veterinary professionals, such as good hygiene and biosecurity, HSE guidelines must still be followed to minimise the risks in the current circumstances; including knowing the symptoms of COVID-19 and isolating and contacting your GP if you have symptoms, social distancing / 2m away from colleagues where possible, wear a face covering (for CDC advice on face coverings Click **HERE**), practice good respiratory-hygiene and hand-hygiene, and maintain a log of who you meet each day.

Veterinary Ireland Advice for Veterinary Practices

While having moved to Level 5, Veterinary Practices may wish to review the advice given in **VetALERT 31/20** of 29th June 2020.

VetALERT 31/20 included a **Media Release from the President**, an **Example Practice Sign**, and the document "**Covid-19 and Companion Animal Veterinary Practice**", which included advice on: Biosecurity protocols and Client / Caseload Management, the Government's **Return to Work Safely Protocol**, Staff Management, Team Splitting, Staff PPE Protocols, and an example protocol for managing client attendances at veterinary practices. This information remains pertinent under current Level 5 measures, but will be reviewed and updated as required.

[VCI Guidance Note to Registrants on COVID-19](#)

The Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) has issued an updated Guidance Note to Veterinary Registrants in relation to COVID-19 and Level 5 measures applicable to veterinary. This Guidance has been sent directly to all Registrants, and is also available on the VCI website - Click [HERE](#).

[Return to Work Safely Protocol](#)

The Government's [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) is a mandatory document, which all businesses, including veterinary practices must follow. Both employers and workers have responsibilities under the Protocol and it is advised that all Veterinary Ireland members, employees and workers, read and understand it.

In line with the Safety, Health & Welfare Act for all other risks within a Veterinary practice, in relation to COVID-19 each practice is required to undertake risk assessments, taking into account a wide range of factors relating to their staff levels, their location, their clients and their practice design and size as well as the national and local COVID-19 situation, and set their own protocols accordingly.

As well as the information contained in the Return to Work Safely Protocol, and that noted above in VetALERT 31/20, in addition the Health & Safety Authority's **BeSmart** online safety statement and risk assessment tool has a specific section on Veterinary practices. To go directly to BeSmart Click [HERE](#).

[Return to Work Safely - HSA Checklists & Templates](#)

As a service to members, the SFA has created a webpage containing the [checklists and templates](#) available from the Health & Safety Authority (HSA), designed to help businesses get up and running again and to inform workers about what they need to do to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

The templates have been drafted based on the Government's [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) and should be read in conjunction with this document. Employers and workers must work together to keep workplaces safe. These checklists will help you to do that.

The Health & Safety Authority (HSA) also has a dedicated [COVID19 Section](#) on its homepage, which is regularly updated.

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

For the latest information on Revenue services and tax & customs measures in place during the COVID-19 Pandemic Click [HERE](#).

SFA Advice - Level 5 Important Updates

The Small firms Association (SFA) of which Veterinary Ireland is an Affiliate Member, has issued the following updates on a number of important COVID-19 related programmes.

1. TWSS - Loose Ends – Action by 31.10.20

As part of the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) reconciliation process (Section 6, [TWSS FAQ Version 18](#)), Revenue require all employers who operated the TWSS to report **on or before 31 October** the actual subsidy paid to their employees for each pay date. Not providing the information required as part of the reconciliation process could result in Revenue seeking to recoup the total temporary wage subsidy paid to the employer. I have attached a copy of the instructions issued by Revenue explaining how this is to be done.

2. EWSS Changes

The Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) has been amended to align with the amendment to Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP). This means there will be 5 payment rates/bands as follows:

- 0 - €151 = €0
- >€151 < €203 = €203
- >€203 < €300 = €250
- >€300 < €400 = €300
- >€400 < €1,462 = €350

The revised scheme will operate in respect of payroll submissions with pay dates on or after 20 October 2020. The Revenue has announced that instead of subsidies being payable a month in arrears, the first EWSS payments in respect of November payrolls will be made in early November, rather than by 5 December. Subsequent payments for November will be paid following receipt of a payroll submission containing an EWSS claim (similar to the TWSS). For more information Click [HERE](#).

3. CRSS - Update

Last week, the Minister for Finance announced the creation of the so-called Covid Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS) as an additional support for businesses subject to significant Covid-19 restrictions. The scheme is intended to be in addition to the supports provided to employers under the Employer Wage Support Scheme (EWSS). CRSS will be available to companies and self-employed individuals operating a business and the business must be operating from a premises located in a region subject to restrictions under the Government's plan for living with Covid-19. For more details on the operations of this new scheme Click [HERE](#).



Remain Vigilant – Please Keep Yourself & Others Safe



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