

**From:** HQ <HQ@vetireland.ie>

**Date:** Thursday 17 December 2020 at 10:16

**Subject:** VetALERT 64/20 - Veterinary Ireland COVID-19 Update - 17th December 2020 –  
Current and Christmas Measures / Vaccinations

Dear Veterinary Ireland Member,

I hope that this email finds you, your family and colleagues, safe and well.

As we head in to the Christmas period, the following may be useful to you in relation to maintaining COVID-19 vigilance, and in keeping yourself and others safe.

This COVID-19 Update contains links to advice and information from Irish Government agencies and the HSE, 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](http://GOV.IE)

[HSE.IE](http://HSE.IE)

[HPSC.IE](http://HPSC.IE)

[HSA.IE](http://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](mailto:HQ@vetireland.ie).

Keep safe, God bless,

Peter Bishton  
Deputy Chief Executive

## Veterinary Ireland COVID-19 Update - 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020

### SUMMARY:

- **Veterinary Ireland COVID-19 Website** Click [HERE](#)
  - **Level 3 - Measures in place from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020** Click [HERE](#)
  - **Level 3 - Measures in place from 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020** Click [HERE](#)
  - **Quick guide to the Christmas 2020 Measures** Click [HERE](#)
  - **COVID-19 Vaccinations** Click [HERE](#)
    - **RTE Briefing on vaccinations** Click [HERE](#)
    - **COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy** Click [HERE](#)
    - **COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation Plan** Click [HERE](#)
  - **HSE COVID-19 Advice** Click [HERE](#)
  - **HSE COVID-19 Vaccination Survey** Click [HERE](#)
  - **Healthy Ireland / Keep Well Campaign** Click [HERE](#)
  - **HPSC COVID-19 Advice** Click [HERE](#)
  - **Health & Safety Authority (HSA) COVID-19 Advice** Click [HERE](#)
  - **Revenue.ie - COVID-19 Advice and Measures** Click [HERE](#)
  - **Ireland's COVID-19 Data hub** Click [HERE](#)
  - **GOV.IE Latest COVID-19 Information** Click [HERE](#)
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### [Level 3 - Public Health Measures Currently in Place & Christmas 2020 Measures](#) from 18.12.20

Ireland is currently at [Level 3](#).

From **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020**, Ireland has moved to **Level 3** of the Government's [Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19](#).

For **Level 3 Measures** in operation from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 Click [HERE](#).

At Level 3, the public health measures include that citizens should work from home unless absolutely necessary to attend in person. Face coverings are recommended in crowded workplaces.

Citizens should stay in their own county, apart from work, education, medical and other essential purposes, if appropriate.

There are restrictions on social and family gatherings, including that citizens should **not mix in their homes or gardens** with any other households outside of those within their **own support bubble**. Other outdoor settings **outside the home or garden** permit **up to 6 people from a maximum of 2 households** meeting, while maintaining strict physical distancing. Face coverings are recommended in busy or crowded areas.

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### **Christmas Measures 2020**

Subject to ongoing review of the trajectory of the virus, from 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 until 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021 inclusive, there will be a slight easing of restrictions in relation to **social and family gatherings**, where citizens can mix in their homes or gardens with **a maximum of 2 other households**. Other outdoor settings **outside the home or garden** permit a **maximum of 3 households meeting**, while still maintaining strict physical distancing. Face coverings are recommended in busy or crowded areas.

For **Level 3 Measures** in operation from **18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 until 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021** Click [HERE](#).

From **7<sup>th</sup> January 2021**, the measures put in place prior to 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 (i.e. those from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020) will apply again.

You can see the [quick guide to the Christmas changes here](#).

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### **Veterinary Profession - Maintaining Vigilance**

**While Level 3 means that veterinary practices and other essential veterinary workplaces 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.

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### **COVID-19 VACCINATIONS**

The Government has just published its COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy and Implementation Plan, which outlines Ireland's high-level plan for safe, effective and efficient vaccination of the population, while safeguarding continued provision of health and social care services. The National COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy was prepared by the High-Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination.

Those over the age of 65 living in long-term care facilities and frontline healthcare workers in direct patient contact, will be the first to receive the vaccine, followed by those aged over 70, with those in the 85+ age group being vaccinated first, followed by 80-84, 75-79 and 70-74 age groups in that order. Other healthcare workers will be next, followed by those aged 65-69, with priority for those in this age group with pre-existing medical conditions. Key workers will receive the vaccine next, followed by those in the 18 to 64 age group who are deemed high risk, are resident in long-term resident facilities or live/work in crowded conditions.

RTE has a full briefing on the vaccination roll-out (Click [HERE](#)), which includes the following table, taken from the [COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation Plan](#):

Group
Adults aged ≥65 years who are residents of long-term care facilities. Consider offering vaccination to all residents and staff on site.
Frontline healthcare workers (HCWs)* in direct patient contact roles (including vaccinators) or who risk exposure to bodily fluids or aerosols.
Aged 70 and older in the following order: 85 and older 80-84 75-79 70-74.
Other HCWs not in direct patient contact.
Aged 65-69. Prioritise those with medical conditions** which put them at high risk of severe disease.
Key workers (to be further refined) including those providing services essential to the vaccination programme e.g. logistical support.
Aged 18-64 years with medical conditions** which put them at high risk of severe disease.
Residents of long-term care facilities aged 18-64.
Aged 18-64 years living working in crowded accommodation where self-isolation and social distancing is difficult to maintain.
Key workers in essential jobs who cannot avoid a high risk of exposure to COVID-19. They include workers in the food supply system, public and commercial transport and other vital services.
Those who are essential to education and who face disease exposure - primary and second level school staff, special needs assistants, childcare workers, maintenance workers, school bus drivers etc.
Aged 55-64 years.
Those in occupations important to the functioning of society, e.g., third level institutions, entertainment and goods-producing industries who work in settings where protective measures can be followed without much difficulty.
Aged 18-54 years who did not have access to the vaccine in prior phases.
Children, adolescents up to 18 years and pregnant women (to be refined).

\*Includes health care workers who work in and out of all healthcare settings

\*\*Chronic heart disease, including hypertension with cardiac involvement; chronic respiratory disease, including asthma requiring continuous or repeated use of systemic steroids or with previous exacerbations requiring hospital admission; Type 1 and 2 diabetes; chronic neurological disease; chronic kidney disease; body mass index >40; immunosuppression due to disease or treatment; chronic liver disease.

While the RTE piece provides a précis of the strategy and plan, full Copies of both the [COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy](#) and the [COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation Plan](#) can be downloaded from [HERE](#).

The COVID-19 vaccine will be available free of charge to everyone in Ireland.

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## **ADVICE FROM THE HSE**

As well as advice on its website, the HSE has initiated a [Stakeholder/Partner communication service](#), providing regular updates specifically on COVID-19 information and advice. As a service to members, Veterinary Ireland Headquarters is in receipt of these communications, and updated information will be passed on as it becomes available.

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### **HSE Advice - Public Health Measures**

Ireland is currently at [Level 3](#).

You can see the [measures in place from 1<sup>st</sup> December here](#).

You can see the [measures in place from 18<sup>th</sup> December here](#).

You can see the [quick guide to the Christmas changes here](#).

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### **HSE - COVID-19 Vaccine Information Survey: Do you have 10 minutes to help?**

Scientists across the world are working to develop safe and effective vaccines for COVID-19. We expect some of these vaccines to be available in 2021.

The HSE is carrying out research to assess sentiment towards and understanding of a COVID-19 vaccine in the Republic of Ireland. This survey will give an understanding of current views and knowledge, and will help inform communications materials and information that will support people to make an informed choice about a COVID-19 vaccine.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and your responses will remain anonymous and strictly confidential. To conduct the survey, the HSE have partnered with Core Research, an independent market research company who are bound by a strict code of conduct not to identify individual responses which guarantees complete confidentiality.

Please share this survey with your colleagues.

Please [take the survey here](#).

It takes 10 minutes to complete. The survey closes at **3pm on Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020**, and is anonymous.

Your opinions are important to us and greatly appreciated.

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## [HSE - Public Health Information](#)

As always, for the most up to date information and advice on Coronavirus, please go to: <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/> and <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/>.

Clinical and professional guidance relating to COVID-19 is available on [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie) where you'll find up to date guidance for healthcare settings and non-clinical settings.

Please also check the Healthy Ireland site [here](#) with further resources and information on the Keep Well campaign.

You can view the latest information on how Ireland is responding to cases of COVID-19 [here](#).

Ireland's COVID-19 Data Hub is [available here](#).

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## [INFORMATION FROM REVENUE](#)

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


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