

From: HQ <HQ@vetireland.ie>

Date: Thursday 31 December 2020 at 13:42

Subject: VetALERT 68/20 - COVID-19 Update - 31st December 2020 - Level 5 Restrictions from 31st December 2020.

Dear Veterinary Ireland Member,

I hope that this email finds you, your family and colleagues, safe and well, and that you managed to have a safe and peaceful Christmas.

With the announcement by Government of a return to full [Level 5 restrictions](#), until at least 31 January 2021, 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

HSE.IE

HPSC.IE

HSA.IE

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

Wishing you all a safe, healthy and happy New Year 2021 – may it be a better year for all of us.

Keep safe, God bless.

Peter Bishton
Deputy Chief Executive

Veterinary Ireland COVID-19 Update - 31st December 2020

SUMMARY:

- **Veterinary Ireland COVID-19 Website** Click [HERE](#)
- **Level 5 - Measures in place from 31st December 2020** Click [HERE](#)
- **HSE COVID-19 Advice** Click [HERE](#)
- **COVID-19 Vaccinations** Click [HERE](#)
- **HSE Website on Vaccine** Click [HERE](#)
- **COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy** Click [HERE](#)
- **COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation Plan** Click [HERE](#)
- **HSE - COVID-19 & Children** Click [HERE](#)
- **Free Flu Vaccine for 2 - 17 year olds** Click [HERE](#)
- **COVID-19 Tests - Illustrated Guide for Children** Click [HERE](#)
- **HSE - New Bereavement Support line - 1800 80 70 77** 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](#)

[LEVEL 5 - PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES IN PLACE FROM 31.12.20](#)

Ireland is currently at [Level 5](#).

From **Thursday 31st December 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** in operation from **31st December 2020** Click [HERE](#).

At Level 5, 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.

The Level 5 restrictions include the closure of non-essential retail from close of business on Thursday 31st December 2020. a ban on all household visits and a 5km limit on (non-essential) travel. Citizens should stay within **5km of their homes**, apart from work, education, medical and other essential purposes, if appropriate. Early Learning and Childcare Services remain open with protective measures. Schools open from 11 January with further review on precise situation in advance of that date

Veterinary services remain essential .

Veterinary Profession - Maintaining Vigilance

While Level 5 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, 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.

[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 relevant updated information will be passed on as it becomes available.

[HSE - Public Health Information](#)

Ireland is currently at [Level 5](#).

You can see the [measures in place from 31st December here](#).

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 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](#).

COVID-19 Vaccinations

The HSE began vaccinations in four hospital sites on 29th December 2020, and a 6 week programme of vaccinations will commence in nursing homes nationwide from 4th January 2021.

The HSE advises that the COVID-19 vaccine will offer protection from COVID-19 and getting a COVID-19 vaccine should also protect from the serious complications of COVID-19. The aim in offering the vaccine to the population is to protect people and reduce the illness and deaths caused by this virus.

HSE have commenced an information programme all about the vaccine, starting with information for the first priority groups being offered the vaccine. The information covers the topics that people told the HSE were most important to them – when the vaccine will be available, who is in the priority groups, safety and long-term side effects, and how effective the vaccine is. HSE began radio and social media advertising on 30th December.

The HSE is encouraging everyone in Ireland to read about the COVID-19 vaccine and to get their information from a factual, trusted source.

- HSE Vaccine Website: www.hse.ie/covid19vaccine
- HSE Vaccine Information Materials Website: www.hse.ie/covid19vaccinematerials

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 is being made available free of charge to everyone in Ireland.

HSE COVID-19 Test and Trace

The HSE advise that when you need a test for COVID-19, our health service works hard to make this as quick and safe as possible for you. If you feel unwell on a public holiday, the weekend or in the evening, the GP out of hours service can refer you for a test too. The GP referral and test are both free of charge. Most people will get a test appointment within 24 hours.

The HSE's new Test and Trace video is [available HERE](#) and sets out step by step how test and trace works.

HSE contact tracers will continue to call people who test positive for COVID-19 and trace their close contacts to give them public health advice. Contact tracers will advise close contacts to restrict their movements for 14 days and arrange a COVID-19 test. People who test positive and/or who have symptoms of COVID-19 must self-isolate in a room on their own and avoid other people. This will help stop the spread of the virus.

GP out of hours services are available throughout the country at weekends and evenings. You can [find contact details for your local GP Out of Hours Service HERE](#).

HSE - COVID-19 and Children

For those Veterinary Ireland members with younger family members, the following may be of use.

Free Flu Vaccine Extended to Children up to the Age of 17

The flu vaccine and its administration has been made available for free for the first time in Ireland for children and young people aged from two to 17 years. Originally available for children aged two to 12 years, nearly 200,000 children have received the nasal flu vaccine through GP practices and pharmacies across the country.

The first batches of nasal flu vaccine are due to expire in the middle of January 2021, so it is important for parents to come forward to get their children vaccinated now. You can [find more information here](#).

COVID-19 and Children - Illustrated Guide for Children About COVID-19 Tests

An illustrated guide for children about going to a COVID-19 test centre has been published. Recently updated, this publication reflects changes to how children are being tested for COVID-19. The test that children have is simpler than the test adults have. Their test sample is taken using a nasal swab. It's easier and quicker for your child. The guide for children is available [HERE](#). For more information on tests for children, see [hse.ie advice for parents](#).

New Bereavement Support Line to Assist Public During the COVID-19 Pandemic

A new national free phone bereavement support line has been launched by the Irish Hospice Foundation in conjunction with the HSE. The national free phone service, **1800 80 70 77** is available Monday to Friday from 10am to 1pm.

The support line aims to provide a confidential space for people to speak about their experience or ask questions relating to bereavement. Callers will be listened to with compassion and be provided with emotional support and information on any practical issues that may be helpful. [Read more about the new Bereavement Support line here](#).

Keeping Well this Winter

The *Keeping Well This Winter* campaign is progressing, and the following are links to some recent interviews, aimed particularly at older and vulnerable people. Veterinary Ireland members may wish to share these with older family members and contacts.

- Watch Dr Nuala O'Connor giving practical advice on staying well this winter on RTE's *Today* show - Click [HERE](#).
- Also listen to Nuala talking to former RTE broadcaster Mary Kennedy for a *Senior Times* podcast - Click [HERE](#).
- Listen to Dr Vida Hamilton also on a *Senior Times* podcast sharing her best advice with well-known broadcaster Mike Murphy on accessing both routine and emergency healthcare services, what to do if you think you have COVID-19 along with the protective measures that staff have taken to in healthcare settings - Click [HERE](#).

INFORMATION FROM REVENUE & DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE

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

With the announcement of Level 5 restrictions, the Small Firms Association (SFA - of which Veterinary Ireland and its members are Affiliate Members) advise that Government are now working on a range of new support packages for businesses including a grant for those businesses that currently do not qualify for the [Covid Restriction Support Scheme \(CRSS\)](#) and a commercial rates waver for the first quarter of 2021.

A good overview of existing government Covid-19 supports and grants can be found on the Department of Enterprise website - Click [HERE](#).

Revenue - Updated Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) Guidelines

SFA also advise that the Revenue Commissioners have recently published updated EWSS guidelines. The changes concern the 2021 eligibility for businesses: they need to demonstrate that their business is expected to experience a 30% reduction in turnover or orders between 1 January to 30 June 2021 for 2021 pay-dates, compared to the same period in 2019. Click [HERE](#) for the updated Revenue EWSS Guidelines.

Webinar on the COVID Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS)

SFA also advise that Revenue recently hosted a Webinar event about CRSS. This webinar provided information and answered questions from various business and trade bodies about the scheme. The webinar was recorded and is available to view - Click [HERE](#) for the recording of the CRSS Webinar.



Remain Vigilant – Please Keep Yourself & Others Safe



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.