

Factsheet for Northern Ireland Coronavirus (COVID-19)



Executive announces new easing of restrictions

Groups of up to six people who do not share a household in Northern Ireland are allowed to meet outdoors but must maintain social distancing, the Executive has said.

Ministers have agreed to ease more lockdown restrictions as part of the first step of their recovery plan, so long as social distancing is followed.

The current lockdown remains in place until 28 May, but some aspects of the first stage of the Executive's plan were allowed to begin earlier this week, with garden centres and recycling centres allowed to reopen. More at: bit.ly/2LGumWy



Rebuilding HSC

Meanwhile, Health Minister Robin Swann has explained how Health and Social Care Trusts have been tasked with developing service rebuilding plans for their respective areas and how rebuilding provides opportunities to transform the system for the better. He said in rebuilding services, we need at the same time to retain significant capacity and flexibility to deal with the continuing COVID-19 threat. It is critically important to recognise that this will not be a return to 'business as usual'. COVID-19 will be with us for sometime. More: bit.ly/2XeyFOo

Stay at home - Wash your hands - Keep your distance

Mental health and emotional support is available during pandemic

Health and Social Care (HSC) mental health services are safe and accessible for anyone who needs them across all HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland.

During Mental Health Awareness Week Health and Social Care and key partners are reminding everyone that looking after your mental health and emotional wellbeing is just as important as looking after your physical health. More at:

bit.ly/3g8p9Vq

Find a range of free resources at www.mindingyourhead.info/

If you are concerned about your mental health or someone you know is in crisis, contact your GP.

The Lifeline 24hr counselling service is available at 0808 808 8000.

If you are in immediate danger call 999.

Plan to help improve mental health services

A new action plan to improve mental health services in Northern Ireland has been published.

The Mental Health Action Plan lists 38 actions to help people with mental health issues access support. It also includes a dedicated COVID-19 response plan.

More at: bit.ly/2ZgEAFc

Updated coronavirus symptoms



Updated coronavirus symptoms now include loss of smell or taste, also called anosmia.

All individuals should self-isolate if they develop a new continuous cough or fever or anosmia.

More at: bit.ly/2ZitvU5

Testing for all care home residents and staff



Testing for COVID-19 is being made available to all care home staff and residents.

The testing has been extended to include residents and staff who do not have symptoms and are not based in homes with outbreaks.

Testing is to be extended to all residents by the end of June, with a rolling staff testing programme also put in place. More: bit.ly/36hibJk

GPs at core of caring for residents in care homes

During the COVID-19 crisis, GPs have remained at the heart of caring for residents in our care homes.

Through the 11 COVID-19 Centres across Northern Ireland, GPs have been able to play an important role in helping to coordinate and support care in those homes which have an outbreak of coronavirus.

More: bit.ly/36iU9xn



Care homes: Surge plan

In recognition of difficulties that COVID-19 presents for care homes the Health and Social Care Board and the Public Health Agency have worked together and developed a surge plan to ensure person centred care is delivered to all residents irrespective of whether they have COVID-19 or not. More: bit.ly/2zaEep4

Get involved in HSC research

The Institute of Health Research's 'Be Part of Research' campaign encourages everyone to find out more about what research is taking place in Health and Social Care and the different ways to get involved.

More: bit.ly/2LLZAM8

Contact tracing to roll out

A contact tracing programme has begun involving all confirmed positive cases of COVID-19.

Contact tracing aims to identify and alert people who have come into contact with a person infected with coronavirus.

More: bit.ly/2z5Sgs4

Public urged to continue to protect themselves

Regular handwashing and social distancing remain important as the battle to curb the spread of COVID-19 continues.

The Executive has advised that face coverings could be used for short periods in enclosed spaces, such as on public transport and in some shops.

More at: bit.ly/3eaK9cw



Parents - be kind to yourselves

Parents of infants are encouraged to be kind to themselves during the COVID-19 pandemic to help protect their child's mental health.

Early parenthood can be exhausting, and particularly during the current circumstances. More: bit.ly/2LJRfZh

Diabetes Helpline

A helpline and email support service is now operating during the current pandemic.

Phone: 028 9536 0600

Email: diabetic.helpline@hscni.net

More: www.ly/2XIVAJ7

'Shielding' guidance to be reviewed

Guidance on shielding for people at potentially higher risk from COVID-19 is being actively reviewed.

Advice will be updated ahead of the end of the initial 12-week shielding period. More: bit.ly/2ZjwStW

For more advice and information

- [Download previous HSC Factsheets](#)
- [For the latest figures on COVID-19 see Department of Health dashboard](#)
- www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus
- www.nidirect.gov.uk/coronavirus
- www.hscboard.hscni.net/coronavirus
- www.gov.uk/coronavirus