

Regulatory response by the Chief Inspector of Social Services to COVID-19

Communique no 2

Friday, 13 March 2020: The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) and the Chief Inspector of Social Services are continuing to review the evolving COVID-19 situation. Our priority remains the safety and wellbeing of people using services. In light of the Government announcement, we have reviewed the regulatory process in relation to designated centres and other children's services, which includes Oberstown Children Detention Campus, and are implementing the following changes with immediate effect.

Changes to inspection practices

All routine inspections of designated centres and other children's services have been cancelled until further notice. However, we will continue to respond to issues of risk, which, in some instances may require an inspection. Our inspectors will adhere to public health advice and take the necessary precautions during these inspections. We will phone the centre in advance of the inspection and ask for your continued cooperation during these inspections.

Special Care Units (Designated Centres)

Changes to the requirements to notify the Chief Inspector of certain instances

We have reviewed the statutory notifications requirements and have determined that the notifications highlighted in yellow in the table below are the minimum required until further notice.

Inspectors will continue to review and risk rate the information contained in these notifications and follow up with providers and persons in charge as required.

In addition, we will shortly issue you with a template of specified information that I, as Chief Inspector, deem necessary in order to be assured of the ongoing safety and quality of care to residents in line with the Health Act 2007 and associated regulations.

Notification	SCU	Required by Chief Inspector until further notice
NF01 Death of a child, including the death of a child following his or her transfer to hospital from the special care unit, and the circumstances and cause of death when established.	Y	Required
NF02 An outbreak of any notifiable disease	Y	Required – as soon as possible
NF03 Any serious injury to a child requiring immediate medical treatment.	Y	Required but only for serious injuries requiring hospital admission
NF05 Where a child is removed, absconds, fails to return, is prevented from returning, is	Y	Required only where the child has been missing for more than 4 hours
NF06 An allegation of child abuse.	Y	Required
NF07 An allegation of misconduct of the registered provider or a staff member or a person working as an intern, a trainee, a person on a placement as part of a vocational training course or a person employed under a contract for services.	Y	Required
NF08 Staff member is the subject of review by a professional body	Y	Not required
NF09 A fire or unplanned evacuation of the centre.	Y	Required only for fire that affects the normal running of the centre
NF30A Change of person in charge	Y	
NF30B Absence of person in charge for 28 days or longer	Y	Not required if Covid-19 related
NF30C Return of person in charge following an absence	Y	Not required if Covid-19 related
NF31 Change of person participating in management	Y	Not required if Covid-19 related

Should you have any queries in relation to these notifications please do not hesitate to contact us at notify@higa.ie.

Registration Decisions

Notices of Proposed Decision and Notices of Decision

It may not be possible for the Deputy Chief Inspector to sign a Notice of Proposed Decision or Notice of Decision for applications for applications to vary conditions of registration (section 52). Should this occur, the decision-maker will provide a cover letter with the Notice confirming the legitimacy of the decision. This will enable a prompt response to your application. Please be assured that your legal rights are not affected by this in any way.

Certificate of Registration

Equally, it may not be possible to issue a Certificate of Registration in the normal way. Please do not be concerned, our registration team will issue these certificates in due course.

Children's services

Notifications of a death or serious incident related to a child known to Tusla should continue to be notified to HIQA in the usual manner.

An outbreak of COVID-19 in a statutory children's residential centre or Oberstown Detention Campus should be notified promptly to HIQA by email at children@hiqa.ie

Special Care Units and other Children's Services

Publication of inspection reports

We have taken the decision not to publish inspection reports at this time.

We will continue to provide updates to registered providers and the public as required.

Mary Dunnion

Chief Inspector of Social Services