

National Updates



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

**Public Health Measures**

As you know, we are seeing some increases in rate of COVID around the country, and as a result, some additional advice and restrictions have been recommended by NPHE and the Government. These measures aim to protect our priorities – caring for vulnerable people and keeping health services open. You can view the national public health measures [here](#).

**COVID-19 Schools and Parenting Resources**

The HSE and the Department of Health have been supporting the Department of Education with back-to-school advice and guidance for families and schools. This includes a guide to how to approach any symptoms of cold, flu or COVID in children, and what to do next. Parents can read this information [here](#).

- For more information and resources for schools and parents, please see: [www.gov.ie/backtoschool](http://www.gov.ie/backtoschool)
- For more information on protecting your child from COVID-19, please see: [www.gov.ie/adviceforparents](http://www.gov.ie/adviceforparents)
- For multi-lingual resources and materials for parents/guardians and for students on returning to school, please see: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/0cf46-resources-and-materials-for-parentsguardians-and-for-students-on-returning-to-school-multi-lingual/>

**COVID-19 Nursing Homes Expert Panel: Final Report**

The report contains a range of recommendations aimed at safeguarding the residents in nursing homes over the next 12-18 months and into the longer term. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

**Bringing Back the Sleep Routine during COVID-19**

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, many families have lost a sense of routine and parents have said that getting this routine right is the key to making a start on improving other unhealthy behaviours. Sleep is the cornerstone to health and wellbeing and its impact on a healthy lifestyle cannot be underestimated. You can find more information on [www.makeastart.ie/](http://www.makeastart.ie/)

The START campaign is a public health awareness campaign from safefood, the HSE and Healthy Ireland. The campaign promotes these healthy behaviours: minimise intake of foods high in fat, salt and sugar, establish water and milk as routine drinks, give child-sized portions to children, include more fruit and vegetables in their diets, increase physical activity levels, limit screen time and establish good sleep routines.

### HSE Approved Guidance for Disability Services

New guidance has been issued by the HSE Disability Services:

- [Interim Guidance on Conducting Assessments in Disability Services](#)
- [Guidance to Support the Resumption of Centre-Based Respite Services for people with disabilities](#)

The HSE have released an updated version of the COVID Tracker App with more information about COVID19 cases in your county. They are asking everyone to download the new version of the app or make sure you update to the latest version of iOS or Android. Download the app here <http://covidtracker.ie>



### Irish Heart Foundation | Escape Your Chair Campaign

This campaign 'Escape Your Chair,' which will run throughout the month of September, aims to inform and advise about the dangers of sitting down for too long and provides useful resources to help you reduce your sitting time. You can calculate your sitting time with the Sitting Time Calculator and join the new Escape Your Chair Challenge to break-up your sitting time. Throughout the month They will also be providing tips on healthy eating and ways to mind your mental health. For more information and to get involved with the campaign click [here](#)



## Age & Opportunity Active National Grant Scheme 2020 | Now Open for Applications

The Age & Opportunity Active National Grant Scheme offers financial supports – provided by Sport Ireland – to local clubs, groups and organisations, nationwide who promote increased participation in recreational sport or physical activity for older people. It aims to assist in the implementation of locally developed, well-planned activity and sport initiatives. In particular, the scheme is aimed at:

- Supporting the work of Age & Opportunity Active including the network of PALs (Physical Activity Leaders) and the development of Go for Life Games and other initiatives;
- Assisting local clubs/organisations to enhance existing opportunities for their members in recreational sport and physical activity;
- Assisting local clubs/organisations to start new initiatives geared at involving older people in recreational sport and physical activity.

This year there will be a few minor changes as a result of the impact of Covid-19 and the restrictions imposed by NPHE. It is important that you review [the Terms and Conditions](#). The Age & Opportunity Active National Grant Scheme opens for applications in August of each year. The deadline for applications for this year's allocation is 12 noon Friday 2nd October 2020. Please return your completed form to [active.grants@ageandopportunity.ie](mailto:active.grants@ageandopportunity.ie).

Download the [National Grant Scheme application form here](#).

Review the [Terms and Conditions here](#).

For further information you can contact the Active Programme team on **01 805 7733** or email [active@ageandopportunity.ie](mailto:active@ageandopportunity.ie)



**Join us live on Facebook**  
**Monday 7th**  
**Wednesday 9th**  
**and Friday 11th**

**at 11am for**  
**Age & Opportunity**  
**Movement Minutes**



**#AgeandOpportunity**

Sessions can be watched live on their Facebook page [www.facebook.com/ageandopportunity](https://www.facebook.com/ageandopportunity) or afterwards on their YouTube page [www.youtube.com/ageandopportunity](https://www.youtube.com/ageandopportunity) where a playlist of all Movement Minutes sessions to date can be viewed



### Asthma Society | Beating Breathlessness WhatsApp Patient Support Service

Beating Breathlessness is a free WhatsApp support service for patients with asthma or COPD (or their carers) who need information or support to manage their condition. Users of this service can use it to WhatsApp message a respiratory nurse specialist about various aspects of their asthma or COPD management including:

- Setting up/revising your Asthma Action Plan / COPD Management Plan
- Your asthma and COPD medications
- Recognising your asthma/COPD symptoms
- Knowing what to do in an asthma attack / COPD exacerbation
- How hay fever might affect your asthma/COPD
- How coronavirus might affect your asthma/COPD
- Triggers that may affect your asthma/COPD
- People with asthma and COPD can also use this support service to learn how to manage their anxiety around their conditions. This particularly important during the current coronavirus pandemic.

**Please note:** The Beating Breathlessness education and support service is **NOT** an emergency service. To start your Beating Breathlessness chat, simply send a WhatsApp message to your Beating Breathlessness nurse on **086 059 0132**. This service is strictly for persons aged 18 yrs. and above.



### Evaluation of the Framework for Dementia: Understand Together in Communities

Dementia: Understand Together in Communities aims to empower people at individual and organisational level to take action to create better awareness and understanding of dementia and inclusive communities where people with dementia and their families are respected, supported and connected.

The framework developed to support this work is new and innovative and focuses on the power of peer influence in affecting change. An independent process evaluation was commissioned by the HSE to understand how this component of the awareness campaign is being implemented and how the initiatives of the National Partner organisations and Community Champions are working. You can read the full report [here](#)



### Ageing Voices - Singing for better health and well-being in older life

Sing Ireland, the national group singing support agency and Creative Aging International have been supported under Creativity in Older Age Programme to produce resources and best practice training programmes for musicians and carers working with older people. The project sets out to build a network across culture, health and local authority projects by gathering data on current provision to best inform and develop resources to raise skills and awareness and address gaps in provision. There is a wealth of singing happening around the country



and Sing Ireland with Creative Aging International want to find out more about provision and celebrate this. They also want to help those who help people to sing, do this as well as they possibly can. Whatever knowledge they start with or environment they work in.

Over the next few months, starting with the questionnaire below, the project will set out to:

- Map where adults sing, why they sing, and who supports this;
- Create and then offering tools and training;
- Share great examples to show what singing groups are doing.

#### **Here's how you can help.**

The digital form in the link below will establish information about singing in your area; <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WDB987W>

If you know groups or individuals leading singing in your local area, Sing Ireland would love to hear from you.

For the information to be included in the mapping, we would be obliged if you could submit the information by Monday September 7th.

The questionnaire asks what type of tools or training might help. If there's something you feel the questionnaire didn't think of please let Sing Ireland know. Sing Ireland will come back with an invitation to use the tools (which will be a free resource) as soon as they are available. The more information you can provide the better the tools will be.

Researchers from University of Limerick, Arts + Health Co-ordinators Ireland and Trinity College Dublin may follow up this Autumn as they do exciting in depth research into the arts for health and wellbeing.

Many thanks for taking the time to support the gathering of this data to help build a national picture of provision.

In these challenging times Sing Ireland is working with national partners on risk assessment and the measures that must be employed to ensure that singing can take place safely during Covid-19. For further information on the steps and statements Sing Ireland has made on this please visit their website: <https://www.singireland.ie/covid-19/a-cautious-return-to-group-singing>



Opticians & Audiologists

#### **Specsavers are open with safety at front of mind**

Specsavers stores across Ireland are open with the health and safety of the community at front of mind. Mindful that more than 80,000 people missed out on appointments in recent months, the optical and audiology experts are encouraging people to book their eye and hearing tests and to address any deterioration they may have experienced due to lockdown.

A recent Specsavers survey found that one third of people saw a change in their eyesight during lockdown, while 12% of people said they noticed a deterioration in their hearing. Specsavers is advising anyone who has noticed any change, to seek professional help now.



And as things start going back to normal, Specsavers understands that customers might be feeling a bit nervous about coming into store again. So, to make sure it's always as safe and clean as possible for staff and customers, Specsavers has made some changes to the normal practices in store.

1. When you come for an appointment one of Specsavers expert team will meet you and talk you through the store distancing and hygiene measures in place.
2. The number of people in store will be limited. Children or older people can be accompanied by an adult or carer.
3. There will be stickers on the floor to guide your journey through the store and ensuring two metres is maintained between customers.
4. Hand sanitiser will be available to customers and colleagues.
5. Specsavers store teams will be wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) as required for their protection as well as yours.
6. Glasses can be tried on but will be thoroughly cleaned by staff after.
7. Test rooms and testing equipment for eye tests and hearing tests will be thoroughly disinfected in preparation for each appointment.
8. Electronic payments are preferred where possible.



Optometrist and store director, Kerril Hickey (pictured to the left), says: 'With people less able to access eye tests over the last few months, opticians are now seeing more eye conditions throughout Ireland, including glaucoma, dry eye, red eye, detached retinas and, unfortunately in some cases, more severe conditions. 'To help detect these conditions, we've invested in the latest optical technology.

Optical Coherence Tomography is cutting-edge, hospital-quality equipment that allows opticians to view the eye in more detail than ever before.

'OCT is a quick, non-contact and painless way to detect treatable eye conditions much sooner than a regular eye test and can in fact detect some conditions up to four years in advance. What's more, a customer's OCT images are stored on file, so Specsavers optometrists can monitor any changes to their eyes over time.'

Audiologist and store director, Orla Walsh, is encouraging anyone who was struggling with their hearing during lockdown to get their ears tested. Specsavers research revealed that more than half of Irish people (54%) struggle to hear on the phone when there is background noise and one in five are being told by friends or loved one that the volume on the TV or radio is too high. These are two tell-tale signs of hearing loss.

Orla adds: 'Lockdown has been a really challenging time for our audiology customers as they rely heavily on their hearing aids to stay

connected to friends, family and with the daily news. We would encourage anyone who struggled with their hearing during the pandemic to make an appointment as soon as possible.'

For people who are still anxious or unable to venture out, Specsavers RemoteCare telephone and video consultation is available via their website [www.specsavers.ie](http://www.specsavers.ie) or by calling the store direct.

Each Specsavers store throughout Ireland is locally owned and is dedicated to providing the best value in designer frames, hearing aids, contact lenses and a breadth of other optical and audiology services. To make an appointment at your nearest locally owned Specsavers visit: [www.specsavers.ie/stores](http://www.specsavers.ie/stores)

## Local Updates



### Impact of Day Service closures on older people in Kerry

The National Office for Services for Older People and Palliative Care Strategy recently commissioned research to look at the impact of the closure of Day Services on service users, carers for people with dementia and the service providers. The final report on that research is available [here](#). The research also looked at the benefits of receiving new repurposed services and the role of the NGO sector which has been central in supporting older people during the COVID pandemic in delivering essential services. This research was done in collaboration with the Community Work Department in Kerry and clients from a sample of day services in Kerry participated in phone interviews as part of the research.

#### The key findings are:

- The closure of day services had a clear impact on existing clients- 86% stating they miss the company, one in five clients express a feeling of loneliness or isolation as a result of the closure of the Day Services.
- New repurposed services (including the provision of Meal On Wheels/ telephone calls, laundry service etc) are having a positive impact on quality of life of the clients with one in two clients availing of new repurposed services.
- There is a high level of confidence and desire to return to services- 90% would be happy to return to Day Services once restrictions are lifted.
- In addition to the existing clients there is also a new cohort of clients who have now established a need for some of the services being provided as a result of COVID. They have benefited from the repurposed services particularly the Meals On Wheels and 91% of clients interviewed expressed a desire to continue with this service in the future.
- For carers of those with dementia the research unsurprisingly found that the closure of services has had a negative impact both on the person with dementia and the carer themselves. The clients are missing the social interaction, personal care and routine and the carers are missing the respite and are feeling the stress associated with this.
- Day Service providers highlighted the positives of repurposing and being able to support people to remain connected and also the

challenges in restoring services while maintaining new re purposed services.

This research highlights the important role Day Services and the Community and Voluntary sector play in supporting older people and their families in the community. It also highlighted how the re purposed services helped maintain people to remain well at home during the COVID situation. The impact of the closure of the day services has been significant and this research is important to support in planning both the future needs of clients and of the services that have been critical in maintaining core essential support mechanisms for older people during COVID 19.



Comhairle Contae  
Fhine Gall  
Fingal County  
Council



Practical Tips  
Staying Fit & Healthy While at Home

### Fingal Digifit | Be Active at Home

This programme is made up of [20 home training sessions](#) to help you stay active while at home. Some of the exercises use weights or resistance bands but if you don't have any equipment you can still follow along the video without it. Instead of using weights, full water bottles can work well too, just make sure you're using a suitable weight for you.

If you would like to build your own workout you can visit the [Exercise Library](#) where you will find a variety of exercises and helpful tips on how to put your session together. If you need any assistance just ask in the [forum](#). You can also find some practical tips on staying fit and healthy while at home.

These exercise sessions are made available by Fingal County Council Sports Office for educational and guidance purposes only.

You should be in suitable physical condition and be able to participate in the exercise. Any home workouts arising from this video series undertaken by you should be done so in a responsible manner.

If you experience any persistent pain or shortness of breath while exercising stop immediately and consult your doctor.



iCRAG  
IRISH CENTRE FOR RESEARCH  
IN APPLIED GEOSCIENCES

### iCRAG | Climate Action & Age Friendly Meath collaboration | Purls of Wisdom



Here is a sneak peek at of some of the Purls of Wisdom pieces received from the wonderful and creative Age Friendly Meath crafters in Trim.



## Your Voice



We've heard about so much good work going on all around the country, please let us know what's happening in your area so we can share those innovative ideas with everyone. Please email us your news to Rachel at [rleavy@meathcoco.ie](mailto:rleavy@meathcoco.ie) Information is one thing we can share right now!

## International Updates



### International Federation on Ageing | Town Hall

The International Federation on Ageing held a Town Hall event called 'COVID-19 and Older People: What it Takes to be an Advocate' earlier today. A recording of this event will be available on the Federation's website <https://ifa.ngo/>



## Important Tips

Always have your **Eircode** close by in case of emergency. You can find your Eircode [here](#)

Perhaps keep a **daily diary** to record the people you are in contact with every day, so if you develop symptoms it will be easier to trace them

### Coronavirus COVID-19

**If you have fever and/or cough you should stay at home regardless of your travel or contact history.**

If you have returned from an area that is subject to travel restrictions due to COVID-19 you should restrict your movement for 14 days. Check the list of affected areas on [www.dfa.ie](http://www.dfa.ie)

**All people are advised to:**

- > **Reduce** social interactions
- > **Keep a distance** of 2m between you and other people
- > **Do not** shake hands or make close contact where possible

If you have symptoms visit [hae.ie](http://hae.ie) OR phone HSE Live: 1850 24 1850

**How to Prevent**

<b>Wash</b> <small>your hands well and often to avoid contamination</small>	<b>Cover</b> <small>your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and discard used tissue</small>	<b>Avoid</b> <small>touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands</small>	<b>Clean</b> <small>and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces</small>	<b>Stop</b> <small>shaking hands or hugging when saying hello or greeting other people</small>	<b>Distance</b> <small>stand at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people, especially those who might be unwell</small>

**Symptoms**  
> Fever (High Temperature) > A Cough > Shortness of Breath > Breathing Difficulties

**For daily updates visit**  
[www.gov.ie/health/covid-19](http://www.gov.ie/health/covid-19)  
[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

Irish Government | COVID-19 Update

## Useful Contacts

**Age Friendly Ireland Shared Service Office** T: 046 9097413 E: [rleavy@meathcoco.ie](mailto:rleavy@meathcoco.ie)

**HSE Advice Line:** Callsave 1850 24 1850

Call from 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 5pm Saturday and Sunday

The following is the list of each **Local Authority's Helpline phone numbers**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Community Response Number</b>
Carlow County Council	1800 814 300
Cavan County Council	1800 300 404
Clare County Council	1800 203 600
Cork City Council	1800 222 226
Cork County Council	1800 805 819
Donegal County Council	1800 928 982
Dublin City Council	01 222 8555
DLR County Council	1800 804 535
Fingal County Council	1800 459 059
Galway City Council	1800 400 150
Galway County Council	1800 928 894
Kerry County Council	1800 807 009
Kildare County Council	1800 300 174
Kilkenny County Council	1800 500 000
Laois County Council	1800 832 010
Leitrim County Council	1800 852 389
Limerick City and County Council	1800 832 005
Longford County Council	1800 300 122
Louth County Council	1800 805 817
Mayo County Council	094 906 4660
Meath County Council	1800 808 809
Monaghan County Council	1800 804 158
Offaly County Council	1800 818 181
Roscommon County Council	1800 200 727
Sligo County Council	1800 292 765
South Dublin County Council	1800 240519
Tipperary County Council	076 106 5000
Waterford City and County Council	1800 250 185
Westmeath County Council	1800 805 816
Wexford County Council	053 919 6000
Wicklow County Council	1800 868 399