



**Health
Information
and Quality
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

Protocol for rolling review of International Public Health Guidance in relation to the Omicron variant (B.1.1.529)

13 December 2021

Version	1.0
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Version history		
Version	Date	Description of change
v1.0	13 December 2021	

Purpose and Aim

The purpose of this protocol is to outline the process by which the Health Information and Quality Authority's Health Technology Assessment (HTA) directorate (HIQA) will identify, review and present public health guidance in relation to the Omicron variant (B.1.1.529), produced by international organisations.

The output from this exercise will be provided as required to relevant stakeholders within the Department of Health. The aim is to inform public health guidance development using international evidence and practice.

1. Process outline

It is important that a standardised approach to the process is developed and documented, to allow for transparency and to mitigate risks which may arise due to changes in staff delivering and or receiving the information.

Three distinct steps in the process have been identified that will be completed with each iteration of this rolling review. These are listed below and described in more detail in sections 2.1-2.3.

- 1.** Search relevant international resources.
- 2.** Review and summarise identified public health guidance.
- 3.** Send updated report to relevant stakeholder in the Department of Health.

2.1 Search relevant international resources

The international resources included for review are from a range of ministries of health and public health agencies. These were chosen, based on them being in a similar phase of pandemic response, guidance being available in English, widespread use of the organisation's advice, and/or the working constraints of the HTA team. The websites listed below will be reviewed to identify new or updated public health guidance on measures being advised or taken internationally in relation to Omicron. Mitigating measures taken from 26 November 2021 (when the Omicron variant was declared a variant of concern) were eligible for inclusion.

EU/EEA countries

- Austria
 - <https://www.sozialministerium.at/en.html>
 - <https://corona-ampel.gv.at/aktuelle-massnahmen/bundesweite-massnahmen/>
- Belgium
 - <https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/faq/>

- o <https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/covid/>
- o <https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/>
- Czech Republic
 - o <https://www.vlada.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/measures-adopted-by-the-czech-government-against-coronavirus-180545/>
- Denmark
 - o <https://coronasmitte.dk/en>
 - o <https://coronasmitte.dk/en/rules-and-regulations>
 - o <https://coronasmitte.dk/en/overview>
- Finland
 - o <https://stm.fi/en/frontpage>
 - o <https://thl.fi/en/web/thlfi-en>
- France
 - o <https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus>
- Germany
 - o <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en>
- Ireland
 - o <https://www.gov.ie/en/>
 - o <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e5175-resilience-and-recovery-2020-2021-plan-for-living-with-covid-19/>
 - o <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/resilience-recovery-2020-2021-plan-for-living-with-covid-19/>
- Italy
 - o <http://www.salute.gov.it/portale/nuovocoronavirus/dettaglioFaqNuovoCoronavirus.jsp?lingua=english&id=230#11>
- Netherlands
 - o <https://www.government.nl/topics/coronavirus-covid-19>
- Norway
 - o <https://www.fhi.no/sv/smittsomme-sykdommer/corona/>
- Portugal
 - o <https://covid19estamoson.gov.pt/>
 - o <https://www.visitportugal.com/en/node/421175>
- Spain
 - o <https://english.elpais.com/news/society/>
 - o <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/Paginas/index.aspx>
 - o <http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/Paginas/inicio.aspx>
- Sweden
 - o <https://www.government.se/government-policy/the-governments-work-in-response-to-the-virus-responsible-for-covid-19/>

- o <https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/smittskydd-beredskap/utbrott/aktuella-utbrott/covid-19/>
- o <https://www.krisinformation.se/>

Non-EU/EEA and UK countries

- England
 - o <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
 - o <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>
- Northern Ireland
 - o <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>
 - o <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you>
 - o <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/doh-guide-to-coronavirus-restrictions-291121.pdf>
- Scotland
 - o <https://www.gov.scot/>
 - o <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>
 - o <https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/>
- South Africa
 - o <https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/disease-index-covid-19/>
 - o <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>
 - o <https://www.health.gov.za/covid19/>
- Wales
 - o <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>
 - o <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-firebreak-frequently-asked-questions>
- Switzerland
 - o https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/das-bag/aktuell/medienmitteilungen.html?dyn_startDate=01.01.2016
- United States
 - o <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

International public health agencies

- WHO
 - o <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- ECDC
 - o <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19>

2.2 Review and summarise identified public health guidance

All identified guidance published and updated will be reviewed, summarised and entered into a predefined data extraction table. Data will be extracted under the following headings:

- Movement of people
- Social or mass gatherings
- Primary schools, second-level schools, higher and adult education
- Business activities
- Amateur sport and recreation, professional sport
- Religious activities
- Public transport
- International and domestic travel
- Culture, leisure and entertainment
- Changes in infection, prevention and control guidance (to include close contact status, restriction of movement)
- Face coverings
- COVID Pass and vaccination programme
- Special arrangements for the Christmas or end-of-year holiday period.

Additionally, links to the guidance, date of publication and date of extraction will also be recorded. Extracted data will be summarised in a report accompanied by the data extraction table.

2.3 Send database to relevant stakeholders

The updated summary of public health guidance on measures being advised or taken internationally in relation to Omicron will be sent to the relevant stakeholders in the Department of Health.

This, where feasible, will be provided by close of business, every two days.

3. Review and update

Given the rapidly changing environment, this protocol will be regarded as a live document and amended when required to ensure it reflects any changes made to the outlined processes.

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