



COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN

MfG COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN

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1.0 Background to COVID-19

The outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has evolved rapidly and the Department of Health is leading the Government response in Ireland to this national public health emergency and it, along with the Health Service Executive's (HSE) Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HSPC), is providing up to date information and advice on its website.

Exposure to COVID-19 is a public health risk which affects all citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic also has implications for all workplaces as it can present a health risk to employees and other persons at a place of work. The reopening of the economy goes hand-in-hand with the provision of public health measures to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 as well as the existing occupational safety and health measures.

Managing the risk of spread in the workplace is important in relation to the health of employees but is also important as part of general efforts to control the spread and protect the most vulnerable. The following protocol describes the measures required to be put in place by employers and adhered to by employees to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

2.0 Sign and Symptoms of COVID-19

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take anything from 2 days up to 14 days for symptoms of coronavirus to appear. They can be similar to the symptoms of cold and flu.

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or above)
- a cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

Some people infected with the virus, so called asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all.

3.0 How COVID-19 Spreads

The virus that causes COVID-19 disease is spread from people in fluid and in droplets scattered from the nose or mouth of an infected person when the person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or speaks. The fluid or droplets land on objects and surfaces around the infected person. Other people contaminate their hands by touching these objects or surfaces and then bring the virus into contact with their eyes, nose or mouth by touching them with their contaminated hands. COVID-19 can also spread if droplets from an infected person land directly on the mucous membranes of the eye, nose or mouth of a person standing close to them.

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It is still not known how long the virus survives on surfaces in different conditions. The period of survival may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment). Studies indicate that it can persist on surfaces for hours and up to several days in the absence of effective cleaning. Thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces is essential. If disinfection is required it must be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning. While people are most likely to pass on the infection when they have symptoms, current information suggests that some infected people spread the virus to others prior to developing or displaying symptoms themselves.

4.0 COVID-19 Policy

This COVID-19 policy outlines MfG's commitment as an employer to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the Executive Director and brought to the attention of all employees, contractors and visitors.

5.0 COVID 19 Policy Statement

Music for Galway is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our employees, contractors and visitors. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. All managers and employees are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus.

We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our employees
- provide up to date information to our employees on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- inform all personnel of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- provide a trained Worker Representative and put in place a reporting system
- adapt the workplace to facilitate physical distancing
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- have all employees undergo an induction briefing
- develop a procedure to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at work
- provide instructions for employees to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during work
- intensify cleaning in line with government advice

All employees will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions. This can be done through the Worker Representative, as stated in *6.0 Responsible Persons for Performing Tasks*.

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6.0 Responsible Persons for Performing Tasks

We have identified suitably trained personnel to help with ensuring that the plan is implemented and checklists are completed. Persons have been identified who have agreed to take responsibility for carrying out tasks such as:

- role of worker representative
- use of checklists to identify any areas for improvement
- regular checks to ensure the plan is being implemented
- review of risk assessments and the safety statement
- training
- reviewing emergency procedures and first aid

We have consulted with the persons responsible for these tasks and have briefed them on the tasks and their responsibilities.

Responsible Persons Task Register			
No.	Task (non-exhaustive list)	Responsible Person	Signature
1	Person responsible for overall implementation of the plan	Anna Lardi	<i>A. Lardi Fogarty</i>
2	Identification and training of worker representative	Anna Lardi	<i>A. Lardi Fogarty</i>
3	Planning and Preparing to Return to Work (Checklist No.1)	Anna Lardi / Suzanne Black	<i>A. Lardi Fogarty</i>
4	Control Measures (Checklist No.2)	Anna Lardi / Suzanne Black	<i>A. Lardi Fogarty</i>
5	COVID-19 Induction (Checklist No.3)	Anna Lardi	<i>A. Lardi Fogarty</i>
6	Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 (Checklist No.4)	Anna Lardi / Suzanne Black	<i>A. Lardi Fogarty</i>
7	Cleaning and Disinfection (Checklist No.5)	Anna Lardi / Suzanne Black / Maeve Bryan / Julie Seagrave	<i>A. Lardi Fogarty</i>
8	Employee Information (Checklist No.6)	Anna Lardi / Suzanne Black	<i>Suzanne Black</i>
9	Worker Representative (Checklist No.7)	Suzanne Black/	<i>Suzanne Black</i>
10	Return-to-work forms	Suzanne Black	<i>Suzanne Black</i>
11	Other:		

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7.0 Employer Information

Employer Name:	Music for Galway
Workplace Address:	Music for Galway, NUI Galway, Riverside Terrapin, Distillery Road, Lower Newcastle, Galway, Ireland
Director / Senior Manager in the Workplace:	Anna Lardi
Worker Representative:	Suzanne Black
Type of Business:	Arts Organisation
Number of Employees:	3
Number of Employees who Deal Directly with the Public:	3
Phone:	+353 (0)91705 962
Email:	anna@musicforgalway.ie

8.0 Return to Work – Planning and Preparing

The planning and preparing phase is critical to ensure a safe return to work and covers such items as

- information and guidance
- return-to-work forms
- identifying worker representatives
- revising our induction briefing
- identifying and putting in place control measures and updating our safety statements
- risk assessments and emergency plans

Employees have been told to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, which have been explained to them, and the return-to-work form will be used to assess employees' health before they enter the workplace.

This policy will provide all employees with information and guidance on the measures MfG will put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus and what is expected of them. Any issues or concerns should be raised immediately and will be responded to as soon as possible.

See 9.0 *Control Measures* for the control measures that will be in place to minimise the risk of employees being exposed to COVID-19.

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Help is available for any employees who may be suffering from anxiety or stress. Face-to-face services are limited at the moment because of the coronavirus outbreak but a number of services are providing online counselling and support, phone and text support. See *Mental health supports and services during coronavirus* document.

Where social distancing is not possible, personnel will be provided with appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and will receive training in its correct use.

The workplace, including all equipment, workstations, benches, doors and frequently touched surfaces, will be thoroughly cleaned according to the cleaning checklist posted in the outer office.

9.0 Control Measures

This section deals with the measures we are implementing to prevent or minimise the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace and in our communities.

9.1 Hand hygiene / hand sanitising

All employees will be made aware of the importance of good hand hygiene and posters on how to wash hands correctly will be displayed in appropriate locations.

MfG will ensure that there is adequate hand washing and hand sanitising stations, which will be regularly checked and well-stocked.

Employees will need to wash their hands:

- before leaving home
- before and after being on public transport
- when arriving / leaving the workplace
- after coughing or sneezing
- before and after eating and preparing food
- after using the toilet
- before smoking or vaping
- where hands are dirty
- before and after wearing gloves
- after touching potentially contaminated surfaces
- if in contact with someone displaying any COVID-19 symptoms

9.2 Respiratory hygiene

Good respiratory measures which limit the spread of the virus are as follows:

- avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth
- cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue
- dispose of tissues in a covered bin

Tissues will be provided along with covered bins that will be emptied regularly. Employees should not share objects that touch their mouth, for example cups and only use their own stationary.

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9.3 Physical distancing

MfG will observe physical distancing in line with the current regulations laid out by the Irish Government (www.gov.ie). Posters will be a visible reminder of what distance employees and visitors are expected to maintain.

Chairs will be placed further apart around the break area table, when required, to comply with physical distancing.

Where it is not possible to maintain the recommended physical distance between employees, PPE equipment will be made available ie. masks, gloves, clear screens between desks.

Employees have been trained in the correct fitting, use, removal, cleaning, storing and disposal of PPE.

9.4 Minimising contact

Employees have been told not to shake hands and to avoid any physical contact.

Meetings, interviews and other business interactions can be done in three ways:

- Large groups will continue to hold meetings via online platforms, allowing the individuals to maintain social distance
- Groups of up to 6 can meet outside or inside while maintaining social distancing, and no longer than 2 hours
- Any indoor locations will be well ventilated

9.5 Considering at-risk employees

MfG will provide an information sheet on *People at Higher Risk from Coronavirus* to all employees, who should inform management if they fall into any of these categories. At risk or vulnerable employees will be enabled to work from home.

9.6 Visiting contractors / others

All visitors will be informed of the workplace measures to help prevent the spread of infection and will be required to record their visit by filling in the *COVID-19 Contact Log*.

To facilitate the safe delivery of goods to the workplace, we will put up a sign on the outer door, instructing delivery personnel not to enter the building and to phone the office to ask for someone to accept the delivery outside.

10.0 COVID-19 Induction

Before returning to work each employee will be required to complete a *COVID-19 Return to Work* form.

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On returning to the office, employees will be told about changes in the workplace due to COVID-19 and updated on new ways of working.

MfG's usual induction for new employees has been revised to include measures to help prevent the spread of the virus and ALL employees will be brought through this induction before starting back to work (see *MfG COVID-19 Induction Training* sheet).

Amongst other things, the following range of items will be brought to the attention of employees and discussed:

- Communication system
- Return-to work form
- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (at home and in the workplace)
- Information on how the virus is spread
- Control measures to help prevent infection
- COVID-19 contact log (purpose of and how to use)
- Identify the Worker Representative and explain purpose
- Changes to risk assessments and safety statement
- Changes to emergency plans and first aid procedures

11.0 Dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19

This section details MfG's procedure to be followed in the event of someone developing the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 while in the workplace. We have identified a way to isolate the affected person from other employees and procedures to be followed to enable them to safely leave the premises.

11.1 Instructions if a person develops signs and symptoms of COVID-19 at work

An employee who starts to display symptoms of COVID-19 in the workplace should immediately report their concerns to the Worker Representative, or senior person present.

The affected person will be asked to self-isolate in their office with the door closed. Any employee who shares the office will vacate immediately.

The following will be available in the isolation area:

- ventilation through opening a window
- tissues
- hand sanitiser
- disinfectant and/or wipes
- gloves, masks
- pedal-operated, closed bin

11.2 Arranging for the person to leave workplace

If the affected person is well enough to travel home, they will be asked to wear a mask when exiting the building. They will be directed to call their GP and self-isolate at home for a

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period of 14 days. They will be advised not to use public transport not to go to their GP's surgery or any pharmacy or hospital.

If the affected person feels unable to go home, they will remain in isolation and allowed to phone their GP. Transport will be organised to bring the person home or to an assessment centre, if the affected person has been directed to go there by their GP.

11.3 Disinfection

The office that was used as the isolation area and any areas where the person was present, will be taken out-of-use until cleaned and disinfected, at least one hour after the affected person has left the building.

Current HSE guidance recommends waste such as cleaning waste, tissues etc. from a person suspected of having COVID-19 should be double bagged and stored in a secure area for 72 hours before being presented for general waste collection.

11.4 Follow Up

The Worker Representative will begin contact tracing using the COVID-19 contact log. An assessment of the incident will be carried out to identify if any follow-up action is needed.

12.0 Cleaning and Disinfection in the Workplace

MfG have put in place a cleaning and disinfection system as regular cleaning and disinfection will help reduce the spread of the virus. (See *Cleaning Checklist*)

We have arranged for frequently touched surfaces to be cleaned regularly. If disinfection of contaminated surfaces is needed, this will be done in addition to cleaning.

Employees will be provided with cleaning materials to keep their own workspace hygienically clean. They will be advised to regularly clean any personal items brought in from home, such as mobile phones, and to avoid leaving them down on communal surfaces or they will need to clean the surface after the personal item is removed.

13.0 Employees Responsibilities in the Workplace

Employees must keep themselves updated on the latest advice from Government and the HSE. They must also cooperate in maintaining the control measures put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus and report any issues or concerns they may have.

Employees should:

- accurately complete and return a *Return to Work* form, at least 3 days before returning to work
- inform the Worker Representative, or senior person present, if there are any circumstances relating to Covid-19 not included in the form but which may need to be disclosed to allow a safe return to work e.g. you are in a higher risk category
- attend any induction programme provided on your return to work

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- co-operate with your employer to make sure the control measures are maintained
- report any concerns about exposure to COVID-19, control measures not being maintained or have any suggestions that could help prevent the spread of the virus
- maintain appropriate physical distancing, avoid touching your face and practise good hand and respiratory hygiene
- avoid any physical contact with colleagues, customers or visitors
- fill in the *COVID-19 Contact Log* as required
- report any symptoms of COVID-19 while at work
- avoid sharing items such as cups, pens etc.
- clean any personal items brought into work and avoid leaving them down on communal surfaces or to clean the surface after the personal item is removed
- clean your own workspace twice daily
- fit, use, remove, clean, store and dispose of any required PPE correctly
- monitor their own temperature prior to leaving home to commute to work

14.0 Workers Representative

MfG has appointed a Worker Representative to ensure that COVID-19 control measures are followed. Good communication channels in the workplace are essential for all stakeholders. All employees should engage with the worker representative to highlight concerns, report defects, submit ideas and identify improvements in the workplace.

Responsibilities of the Worker Representative:

- keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 advice from Government so that they can help in keeping fellow employees informed
- perform a daily check of the workplace to ensure that the control measures are in place and are being maintained
- report any problems, areas of non-compliance or defects that they see. Records should be kept including what action was taken to remedy the issue
- provide information regarding higher risk categories
- maintain the worker contact log
- perform contact tracing for anyone displaying signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in the workplace
- pass on information on supports available if a fellow employee is feeling anxious or stressed
- review the *Cleaning Checklist* to ensure adherence to the cleaning and disinfection of the workplace procedure



Signed: _____

Date: __23/10/2020_____

MfG Executive Director