An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt,
Gnóthaí Baile agus Imirce
Department of Justice,
Home Affairs and Migration

# IPAS Infectious Disease Protocol (Public Health)

November 2025

Prepared by the Department of
Justice, Home Affairs and Migration
**gov.ie**

# Contents

1 Introduction ..... 3

2 Medical Officer of Health legislation ..... 3

3 Isolation ..... 4

4 Responsibilities (to be read in conjunction with Process table below) ..... 4

4.1 Centre Management responsibilities within this protocol include: ..... 4

4.2 IPAS responsibilities within this protocol include: ..... 5

4.3 Regional Department of Public Health (MOH) responsibilities within this protocol include: ..... 5

5 Transport ..... 6

6 Process ..... 7

7 Contact Details ..... 9

7.1 Find a GP ..... 10

7.2 Area Departments of Public Health ..... 10

7.3 HSE National Infectious Diseases Isolation Facility (St. Ita's) ..... 10

# 1 Introduction

This protocol sets out the interaction between International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS), IPAS Centre management, HSE Departments of Public Health and the HSE National Social Inclusion Office (NSIO) in the event of a case or outbreak of specified infectious diseases in IPAS accommodation.

An *outbreak* refers to two or more linked cases of the same illness or the occurrence of cases of infectious disease in excess of what "would normally be expected" in a defined community, setting, geographical area or season: but can be a single case of disease caused by a significant pathogen (e.g. diphtheria). An outbreak is declared by Public Health following a Public Health Risk Assessment (PHRA).

# 2 Medical Officer of Health legislation

This protocol is informed by the requirements of the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) legislation. Medical practitioners are required by law to notify the Medical Officer of Health (i.e. Regional Directors of Public Health (RDPH) and Consultants/Specialists in Public Health Medicine (CPHM/ SPHM) in each HSE Regional Department of Public Health and in the National Health Protection Service) of certain (notifiable) infectious diseases.

- The Medical Officer of Health has the responsibility and authority to investigate and control notifiable infectious diseases and outbreaks under the legislation, and to "*take such steps as are necessary or desirable for investigating the nature and source of such infection, for preventing the spread of such infection, and for removing conditions favourable to such infection"* (Article 11, Infectious Disease Regulations 1981).
- In the case of specific public health need (e.g. infectious disease case or outbreak) as determined by the Medical Officer of Health, the MOH and/or their team will sometimes need urgent access to Personal Identifiable Information (PII) or other information, in order to protect individuals and the public. Processing of such personal health information is allowed on public health grounds under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and under the MOH legislation.
- Under the terms of the MOH legislation, *"a person who refuses to comply with a requirement or direction given or a request for information made* [by the Medical Officer of Health or their designate] *in pursuance of any of the provisions of these Regulations shall be guilty of a contravention of these Regulations"* (Article 19, Infectious Disease Regulations 1981).

# 3 Isolation

When isolation of a person is necessary because of a suspect or confirmed infectious disease, centre management will endeavour to provide a space for isolation within the accommodation.

Should isolation not be possible on-site or in another accommodation centre, the **Medical Officer of Health (MOH)/ Public Health** will identify suspect/confirmed case(s) and contact(s) who require referral to the HSE National Infectious Diseases Isolation Facility (NIDIF) on St. Ita's campus at Portrane, County Dublin or other local isolation facility if available, and will advise regarding the expected length of stay.

Following consultation with the MOH, the **local HSE Migrant Health/ Social Inclusion/Healthlink in-reach team** will complete the necessary referral documentation for the NIDIF for affected resident(s) and communicate with the NIDIF regarding the referral.

# 4 Responsibilities (to be read in conjunction with Process table below)

## 4.1 Centre Management responsibilities within this protocol include:

- To follow Department of Public Health guidance and directives including provision of isolation rooms within the accommodation setting (where possible).
- To inform both IPAS and relevant Department of Public Health where they are unable to adequately facilitate Public Health guidelines in terms of accommodation available.
- To provide the Department of Public Health with any information, including Personal Identifiable Information (PII), if/when requested.
- To contact IPAS to arrange transport, where accommodation is required outside of centre i.e. to another accommodation centre *or* to the HSE National Infectious Diseases Isolation Facility (NIDIF) on St. Ita's campus at Portrane, County Dublin, when advised by the Department of Public Health.
- **Ensure person in charge is aware of this protocol** and of the **contact details of (a)** the **relevant local Department of Public Health** and **(b)** the **clinical (GP services) 'out of hours' (OOH) contact details** (see 'Contacts' at end of document).
- To liaise with IPAS and the relevant Department of Public Health during an outbreak.

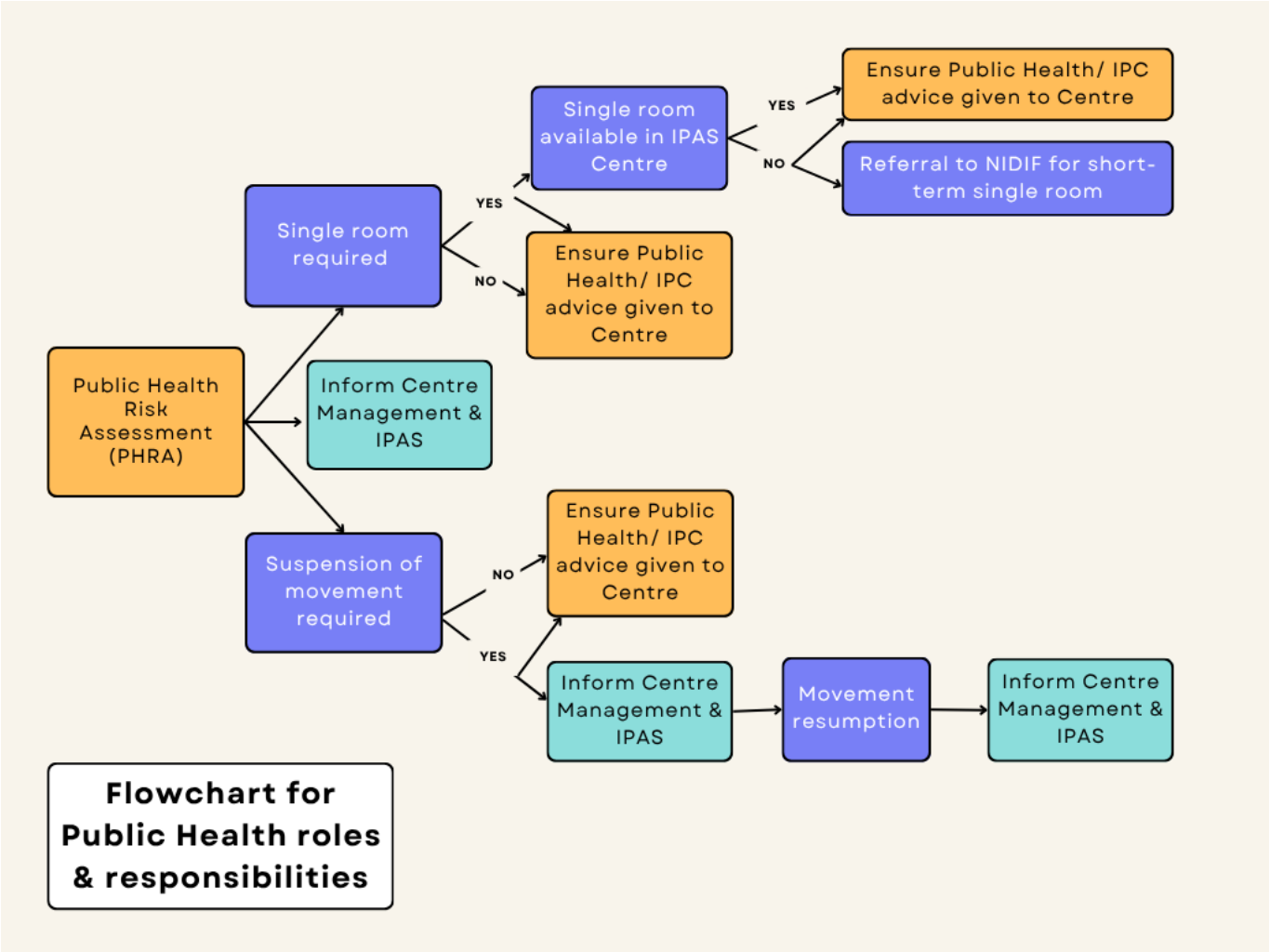
## 4.2 IPAS responsibilities within this protocol include:

- To provide the respective Department of Public Health with Personal Identifiable Information (PII) when requested.
- Where necessary, on advice of Public Health, suspend movements in/out of accommodation centres.
- To endeavour to source single room accommodation where necessary and advised by Public Health.
- To arrange transport, if accommodation is required outside of the Centre, to and from another accommodation centre *or* to the NIDIF on St. Ita's campus at Portrane.
- Inform the Department of Public Health (see 'Contacts') confirming the date that movements to and from accommodation centres have been paused following said Department of Public Health advice.
- IPAS to cc the National Social Inclusion Office (socialinclusion@hse.ie) on communication to the respective Department of Public Health.

## 4.3 Regional Department of Public Health (MOH) responsibilities within this protocol include:

- To facilitate a Public Health Risk Assessment (PHRA),see Figure 1, which may include requesting information from the centre managers and IPAS. Following PHRA, Public Health will give direction on the "*steps necessary or desirable....*" *for preventing the spread of such infection, and for removing conditions favourable to such infection"* (Article 11, Infectious Disease Regulations 1981).
- To include IPAS in all communication with the Centre management regarding the PHRA, by cc'ing residentwelfareteam@justice.ie.
- To inform centre management and IPAS where a single room or restricted accommodation is required to prevent spread of infection.
- To inform centre management and IPAS when investigation and control of an infectious disease requires transfers to and from an accommodation centre (or part of a centre) to be suspended.
- To inform centre management and IPAS when (the date) the movement of residents to and from the accommodation centre (or part of the centre) can recommence.
- Where single room/restricted accommodation is not available in the centre or other accommodation centre, to identify suspect/ confirmed case(s) and contact(s) who require referral to the HSE NIDIF on St. Ita's campus at Portrane, or other local isolation facility, if available, and to advise on the expected length of stay in the NIDIF.
- To inform IPAS when a referral is made to the NIDIF, or other local isolation facility.
- To inform Centre Management and IPAS where a resident should not be moved from the accommodation setting for public health reasons.

**Figure 1 - Public Health Risk Assessment (PHRA). Flowchart of Public Health Roles page**




# 5 Transport

Transport will be arranged by IPAS where temporary, alternative accommodation is required for the purposes of isolation or quarantine, in the event of a *case or outbreak of infectious disease* in an IPAS accommodation centre. This includes transport to an alternative IPAS centre or to the HSE National Infectious Diseases Isolation Facility (NIDIF) on St. Ita's campus at Portrane, County Dublin (or other local isolation facility) and return. IPAS has an agreement with a taxi provider to transport person(s) with a suspect/confirmed infectious disease and/or their contacts.

- Where a requirement for isolation or quarantine occurs during the working week, IPAS will contact provider and arrange a taxi.
- Where a requirement for isolation or quarantine occurs outside of working hours, the Centre Manager will contact the IPAS Duty Phone to arrange transport on their behalf.
- In all cases, IPAS must notify the taxi provider to implement infection control & prevention measures

# 6 Process

| General Queries | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Step** | **Action (Office Hours)** | **Action (Out of Office Hours)** |
| **Reporting a Notifiable Infectious Disease** | 1. Centre manager to contact local GP service to facilitate clinical assessment and care of the person(s) with suspect/confirmed infectious disease.<br>2. Centre manager to inform local HSE Social Inclusion in-reach team.<br>3. GP service (and/or HSE Social Inclusion in-reach team) to contact the local Dept. of Public Health to report suspect/confirmed case or outbreak of a notifiable infectious disease.<br>4. Centre manager to inform IPAS by email. | 1. Centre manager to contact local GP OOH service to facilitate clinical assessment and care of the person(s) with suspect/ confirmed infectious disease (if not assessed already).<br>2. If clinician considers that urgent public health risk assessment (PHRA)/ advice is required, GP OOH service to contact the Public Health Emergency OOH service via the NAS National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC).<br>3. Centre manager to inform IPAS by email and Duty Phone. |
| **Assessment** | Centre manager to provide all relevant information to –<br>• Clinical (GP) service to facilitate clinical assessment.<br>• Department of Public Health to facilitate Public Health Risk Assessment (PHRA). | Centre manager to provide all relevant information to clinical (GP) OOH service to facilitate clinical assessment.<br>If clinician considers that urgent public health risk assessment (PHRA)/ advice is required, GP OOH service to contact the Public Health Emergency OOH service to facilitate PHRA. |
| **Recommendation** | **Department of Public Health** will make a recommendation to **centre manager** and **IPAS** as to whether the resident(s) requires isolation, single room accommodation and/or the restriction of movements to and from all or part of the centre. | If an urgent PHRA is required, the **Public Health** Emergency OOH service will make a recommendation to **centre manager** and **IPAS** as to whether the resident(s) requires isolation, single room accommodation and/or the restriction of movements to and from all or part of the centre. |

| Isolation Cases | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Step** | **Action (Office Hours)** | **Action (Out of Office Hours)** |
| **On-Site Isolation** | Should isolation be recommended, centre manager and IPAS to endeavour to provide isolation rooms within the accommodation. | If isolation is recommended, the centre manager and IPAS to endeavour to provide isolation rooms within the accommodation. |
| **St. Ita's Isolation Facility Referral** | Should on-site isolation not be possible, and following consultation with the MOH, the referring clinician (or local HSE Migrant Health/ Social Inclusion in-reach team) to complete a referral form to the NIDIF for affected resident(s). | If on-site isolation is not possible, and following consultation with the MOH, the local HSE Migrant Health/ Social Inclusion/ Healthlink in-reach team to complete a referral form to the NIDIF for affected resident(s). |
| **Transport** | IPAS should arrange for transport of affected resident(s) with contracted taxi provider, notifying the taxi provider to implement infection control and prevention measures. | IPAS should arrange for transport of affected resident(s) with contracted taxi provider, notifying the taxi provider to implement infection control and prevention measures. |

| Single Room Accommodation | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Step** | **Action (Office Hours)** | **Action (Out of Office Hours)** |
| **Request** | **Department of Public Health** to contact **IPAS** where a single room or restricted accommodation is required.<br>If a single room cannot be sourced within IPAS accommodation, referral should be sought to the NIDIF on St. Ita's campus (see above). | Centre manager to contact IPAS duty phone to alert them that Public Health has advised that single room or restricted accommodation is required to be arranged on the next working day. This request to be followed up in-hours by the Public Health day duty team.<br>For urgent cases referral should be sought to NIDIF on St. Ita's campus (see above). |
| **Provision** | In conjunction with centre management, IPAS should endeavour to source single room accommodation for affected resident(s). | In conjunction with centre management, IPAS duty phone should endeavour to source single room accommodation for affected resident(s). |
| **Transport** | IPAS should arrange for transport of affected resident(s) with contracted taxi provider, notifying the taxi provider to implement infection control and prevention measures. | IPAS should arrange for transport of affected resident(s) with contracted taxi provider, notifying the taxi provider to implement infection control and prevention measures. |

| Restricted Movements | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Step** | **Action (Office Hours)** | **Action (Out of Office Hours)** |
| **Request** | **Department of Public Health** to inform the **Resident Welfare Team within IPAS** – with Subject line –<br>Infectious Disease Outbreak (or Case), when movements to and from the centre should stop until the outbreak is controlled/resolved.<br>IPAS should ensure movements cease at this point. | Centre manager should inform IPAS Duty Phone of recommendation from Public Health Emergency OOH service that movements to and from the centre should be stopped until outbreak is controlled/resolved.<br>**Public Health** Emergency OOH service to inform the **Resident Welfare Team within IPAS** at the earliest opportunity –<br>Infectious Disease Outbreak (or Case), from<br>when (date), and for how long it is estimated that movements to and from the centre should stop.<br>IPAS should ensure movements cease at this point. |
| **Re-opening** | **Department of Public Health** to inform **IPAS** when movements to and from the Centre can recommence. | N/A. The Centre should only reopen to movements on the instruction of Public Health. |

# 7 Contact Details

| Organisation | Role | Contact Details |
|---|---|---|
| IPAS | Resident Welfare Team | ResidentWelfareTeam@justice.ie |
| IPAS | Duty Phone | **Available to relevant stakeholders only** |
| HSE NSIO | Liaison for IPAS/UCTAT at the National Social Inclusion Office | socialinclusion@hse.ie |
| HSE National Infectious Diseases Isolation Facility (NIDIF) on St. Ita's campus at Portrane, County Dublin | National Infectious Diseases Isolation Facility | **01 921 0158 (Admin)**<br>HSE Electronic Referral Form **or**<br>Printable Referral Form |

## 7.1 Find a GP

- Information on local GP practices can be found at https://www2.hse.ie/services/find-a-gp/
- Information on local GP out-of-hours services can be found at https://www2.hse.ie/services/find-a-gp-out-of-hours/.

## 7.2 Area Departments of Public Health

- A **map** of the geographic remit of each Public Health Department and in-hours contacts can be found here.
- List of Medical Officers of Health (MOH) by HSE Health Region – see Who to notify on the HPSC website. *'PublicHealth.Area@hse.ie'* email addresses are monitored **in-hours only**.
- Out of hours: Clinicians can phone Public Health in their area via Ambulance Control/ the NAS National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC)**.**

## 7.3 HSE National Infectious Diseases Isolation Facility (St. Ita's)

- The HSE National Infectious Diseases Isolation Facility (NIDIF) on St. Ita's Campus in Portrane, Co. Dublin is a 43-bed, 24-hour facility for self-caring individuals with infectious diseases who are aged 18 years and older and who are unable to isolate in their own environment.
  - Where family circumstances require the isolation of babies and children, this can also be accommodated once the minors are accompanied by a parent or guardian.
  - Individuals who are not self-caring, but who can be escorted by designated carers, may also be accommodated.
- St. Ita's accepts referrals from **clinicians**. Queries regarding the referral process and suitability for isolation can be raised with the Nursing Team on a 24-hour basis, by calling 01 921 0158.
- Clinicians who wish to refer patients to the HSE National Infectious Diseases Isolation Facility are required to complete either the electronic referral form or the printable version (includes additional information on the NIDIF).