



Diocese of Down and Connor

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HR UPDATE FOR CLERGY AND STAFF

15th February 2022

Dear Reverend Fathers/Line Managers,

The NI Health Minister's announcement yesterday to further ease restrictions is a welcome step. Community transmission is still very high, and our hospitals remain under pressure. However, with the reduced threat from the Omicron variant we are moving away from an emergency and legislated framework to a new approach where making safer choices is embedded in our daily lives and an exercise of personal responsibility.

However, as a Diocesan Trust we continue to urge a cautious approach, and it is incumbent on everyone of us to act responsibly and take whatever precautions we can to keep ourselves, our family, and the wider community safe.

As stated by the Health Minister: *"Please do not jump the gun and start behaving as if the pandemic is over. This is not the case."*

There are many clinically extremely vulnerable people who will be worried by the Health Minister's announcement, and who will be extremely worried about the reduction of precautions. So, if you can continue to wear a mask and keep your distance, it is recommended that you continue to do this.

With the easing of Covid regulations we must continue to do our best to cut down the risks of infection and transmission, whilst in our place of work. This means looking after each other by following public health guidance.

Working from home if you can, remains in place at this time, and for those employees who cannot work remotely, we strongly recommend the continuation of regular Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) when meeting with others.

It is also important to note that if you test positive for Covid either via a PCR test or on an LFT that you must continue to email the Covid sickness absence to absence@downandconnor.org whilst still isolating for the required amount of time. Advice in this respect can be obtained from the HR Office at Lisbreen.

Coronavirus is likely to stay with us in some form for some time, so a sustained effort by us all to follow public health guidance will help reduce infection numbers and support our health service.

With this in mind and for your own safety and the safety of others around you in the workplace we strongly encourage:

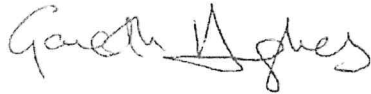
- The wearing of face coverings;
- Good ventilation;

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- Keep your distance – maintain an awareness of your space when working with or arranging meetings with others;
- Continued good hand hygiene and good respiratory practices.

If you require further guidance or support, please do not hesitate to contact the HR Manager at m.toner@downandconnor.org / mobile number: 07908 799994.

Yours faithfully,



Gareth Hughes
Chief Operating Officer
Down and Connor Diocesan Trust



Marie Toner
Human Resources Manager
Down and Connor Diocesan Trust