

Contact Tracing in Ireland

Testing and Contact Tracing are vital components in the management of COVID-19 and preventing onward transmission of the virus. Anticipating an increase in the number of cases identified as COVID-19 positive, the HSE developed a national Contact Management Programme (CMP). Contact Tracing operates in four steps:

1. **Case:** Notification of test result to a person where COVID-19 is detected or not detected and provision of advice.
2. **Contacts:** Identification of close contacts of a person where COVID-19 is detected by Callers in Contact Tracing Centres, supported by the COVID Tracker App.
3. **Control:** Contact with people who are close contacts of people where COVID-19 is detected for public health advice and management (see process map on next page).
4. **Active Follow-up:** With people who are close contacts (usually for 14 days) from last contact with a person where COVID-19 is detected; this includes daily text messages and arranging testing as required for people who are close contacts.

The CMP has the capacity to communicate with thousands of contacts per day.

The CMP supports Departments of Public Health (DoPH). The four-step Contact tracing is done by a national team thereby enabling DoPH to respond to complex contact tracing and surveillance. People working in the HSE, wider public service, educational sectors, and others, have been identified to work in Contact Tracing Centres (CTC) in a variety of roles.

Aim	The aim of the CMP is to notify results to people tested (or their nominated person) and to identify and manage contacts of people where COVID-19 is detected.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify and close down chains of transmission of COVID-19. • To release time for Public Health Departments to undertake high value public health expert activity including enhanced surveillance, outbreak management and complex control activity. • To help slow the progress of the COVID-19 epidemic in Ireland with the intention of lessening the impact on the delivery of vital healthcare services.

CTC Team Training and Support

People working in CTCs are trained in the following three ways:

1. Self-directed learning using materials accessible through an online CMP Learning Platform. A series of audio presentations and video role-plays.
2. Virtual facilitated learning sessions: Call 1, Call 2, and Call 3 Script Scenarios and CovidCare Tracker Training.
3. CTC on the job induction buddying, access to resources, staff support and debriefs.

After completing all 3 parts of the training programme, callers begin work in a Contact Tracing Centre. The CTC callers have access to training updates, a team support lead and public health specialist for advice and queries.

CovidCare Tracker CMP Module

The CovidCare Tracker is the online platform which supports key aspects of care given to people where COVID-19 is suspected / detected, and their close contacts who may be at higher risk of contracting COVID-19. The online platform supports clinical teams across different COVID-19 care pathways. The CMP contact tracing component is a major element of the platform. It incorporates collection of essential data. It facilitates automatic notification of not detected results by SMS (text message), referral for testing and active follow up communication. It also allows for reporting on CMP.

What happens during Contact Tracing?

Our process for Contact Tracing is illustrated below.

Contact Tracing Process

