

## Government Updates

The Government confirmed on Friday evening that Dublin is to move to Level 3 of the *Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19*, aimed at curtailing the increasing numbers of Covid-19 within the county. With tighter restrictions in place, employers must now ensure the new parameters set out in the plan are adhered to.

From an employment perspective this means that all employees should work from home unless absolutely necessary to attend in person. Also contained within the restrictions at Level 3, is a requirement to stay within the county, or other defined geographical area, unless for essential purposes, education and work. Employers should also be mindful that public transport will be at a reduced capacity and for essential workers or essential purposes only.

For some organisations within the Community and Voluntary sector the return to full time remote working will mean that employers are now tasked with ensuring that systems and processes are put back in place to facilitate the restrictions of Level 3, for others where a permanent decision regarding remote working has already been made it will remain business as usual.

### **Health & Safety Considerations**

While Dublin remains at Level 3 of the plan, the requirement for remote working should prompt employers to be cognisant of their responsibility of ensuring a safe working environment for employees, whether in the office or at home.

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 employers must evaluate the health and safety of workstations, with particular focus on physical difficulties, eyesight issues and mental wellbeing.

#### Employers Must:

- Carry out an analysis or risk assessment of employee workstations
- Provide information to employees in relation to measures which have been implemented
- Provide training to employees in the use of workstations before commencing work with display screen equipment and whenever the organisation of the workstation is modified
- Perform a further analysis or risk assessment where an employee transfers to a new workstation or significant new work equipment, change of equipment or new technology is introduced at an individual's workstation

- Ensure that the provision of an appropriate eye and eyesight test is made available to every employee

Under the legislation, it is the employer's duty to examine and assess the standards of health & safety of an employee's workstation and take any corrective action necessary.

While the government have stated that Dublin will remain at Level 3 of the plan for a 3-week period it is important that employers continue to ensure the health and safety of all employees during this time and beyond.

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