

RIDDOR reporting of COVID-19 cases affecting Diocesan Clergy

In light of the current global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the need for clarity has arisen regarding the HSE announcement that confirmed cases of COVID-19 may be reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) and how these apply to the pastoral activities carried out on behalf of the Dioceses.

In the event that there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 where:

- an incident at work has led to someone's possible or actual exposure to coronavirus;
- a worker has been diagnosed as having COVID-19 and there is reasonable evidence that it was caused by exposure at work; or
- a worker dies as a result of occupational exposure to

coronavirus, a RIDDOR report **must be submitted** to the HSE.

A priest's duties may involve working within elevated-risk premises such as hospitals, care homes and other premises with high-risk or vulnerable groups. A potential case of COVID-19 may reasonably be traced back to exposures within these environments and, as such, must be reported to the HSE.

The responsibility for the reporting is where clarity is required. As priests are not employees of their Bishop or Diocese, the duty that rests with the Diocese is to **inform the person in control of the premises** where it is reasonably considered the exposure occurred. **That person would then have the duty to complete a RIDDOR report and submit it to the HSE.** For example, the Diocese must report cases in which it is reasonably considered the exposure occurred in a parish, but the NHS should report cases involving chaplains whom it is believed contracted the virus whilst carrying out their chaplaincy duties in hospital.

Helpful guidance on the control of exposure to the virus can be found on the [Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales' website](#).