



**Press Release Thursday 12 March 2020**

**Statement from the National Public Health Emergency Team**

The National Public Health Emergency Team met last night (Wednesday 11 March) to review latest evidence of the spread of COVID-19. NPHEM has made a recommendation that Ireland move to Delay Phase.

There has been a significant increase in recent days in the number of cases detected in Ireland, a number of clusters in hospital settings with some cases in intensive care and a number of cases arising from community transmissions.

New advice provided by ECDC yesterday, highlighting that the detection of COVID-19 cases and deaths outside of known chains of transmission, is a strong signal that social distancing should be considered. The ECDC also recommended that the measures should be taken early and should be decisive, rapid, coordinated and comprehensive.

Today, Ireland introduces new measures as part of our effort to interrupt the transmission of COVID-19.

- Individuals who have symptoms should self-isolate for a period of 14 days
- Individuals should reduce discretionary social contacts as much as possible
- Elderly and/or medically vulnerable people should reduce as much as possible contacts outside home.
- There should be no mass gatherings;
  - a) involving more than 100 people if located indoors
  - b) involving more than 500 people if located outdoors
- Closure of museums, galleries and tourism sites
- Closure to students of schools, creches, other childcare facilities and higher education institutions.
- Reduction of workplace contacts, and implementation of remote working practices and teleconferencing where possible and not to travel for meetings. Work time and break times should be staggered, where possible.
- Restriction of visiting at hospitals, long term care settings, mental health facilities, prisons, and spacing measures in homeless shelters.

NPHET further recommends that these measures should be introduced until Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The impact of these measures will be under continuous review.

Dr. Tony Holohan, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health, said; “The National Public Health Emergency Team and the Health Sector in its entirety has been preparing for the effects of COVID-19 on our population.

“Now, we need citizen’s to follow these new measures and help us protect the most vulnerable in our society, help our health service treat this virus effectively and ultimately keep each other as healthy as possible.”

## **ENDS**

Letter from the National Public Health Emergency Team to Minister for Health, Simon Harris TD available [here](#).

### **Notes to the Editor:**

It can take up to 14 days for symptoms of Covid-19 (Coronavirus) to show.

Symptoms may include:

- a cough
- shortness of breath
- breathing difficulties
- fever (high temperature)

Covid-19 (Coronavirus) can also cause more severe illness, including:

- pneumonia
- shortness of breath
- breathing difficulties
- fever (high temperature)

Things you can do to protect yourself from getting Covid-19 (Coronavirus) include:

- wash your hand properly and regularly
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough and sneeze
- Wash your hands properly and regularly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub:
  - after coughing and sneezing
  - after toilet use
  - before eating
  - before and after preparing food