

Understanding current perception of COVID-19 risk among the general public 28 May 2020

Context

As Ireland progresses through the phases to reopen economic and social life, NPHE has asked to understand current perception of risk around COVID-19 among the general public, and the tools they require to mitigate that risk.

This topic has been explored in focus groups with the general public on Tuesday 26 May.

Feedback from Focus Groups

1. People's perception of risk remains high for now – and for the future
 - Fearful of a second wave (61% think it likely)
 - Degree of risk perception is driven by;
 - Age: younger vs. older vulnerable
 - Emotional or physical closeness to a vulnerable person
2. People are balancing their need for reconnection with their sense of individual responsibility as they navigate through easing of restrictions
 - Feeling of collective responsibility remains high, as is social disapproval for blatantly ignoring of rules
 - People have broken some rules - 5km limit and physical distancing with people outside the immediate household – but are mitigating risk by tight control of handwashing, adherence to physical distancing and/or limiting touch.
3. People do not feel confident in public spaces
 - Perception that 'others' are less vigilant
 - Gatherings in outdoor public spaces make people feel angry.
 - Want to understand the rules for each scenario and see them complied with (See Appendix 1)

Key Insight

Public are still learning how to navigate this COVID world. They do not yet understand the different levels of risk associated with different scenarios – to them all scenarios are risky. They want to learn 'the rules' first before then understanding how to apply them appropriately.

Next Steps

- Insights to be further refined by the Behavioural Subgroup.
- Guidelines for each scenario to be communicated to the general public via yellow collateral

Appendix 1

Behaviours by Scenario - DRAFT

At home	At work	Outdoors – exercising	Outdoors – gatherings	Shopping	Public transport	Indoor gatherings
Wash your hands when you come in	Stay 2m away from colleagues	Stay 2m away from people	Stay 2m from non-household friends	Keep 2m from others/in a queue	Keep 2m from others on board	Stay 2m from others
Stay home with your household contacts	Minimise face to face meetings with colleagues	Practice good cough /sneeze hygiene. Use your elbow or a tissue	Practice good cough /sneeze hygiene. Use your elbow or a tissue	Wear a face covering if social distancing is not possible	Wear a face covering if social distancing is not possible	Don't touch your face Wear a face covering
Know the symptoms. Self isolate if you have them	Wash your hands before returning to your station/desk	Wash your hands when you get home	Wash your hands when you get home	Wash your hands when you get home	Wash your hands when you alight	Avoid these as much as possible – and keep as short as you can
	Practice cough /sneeze hygiene	Don't share exercise equipment	Don't share food or other items	Practice cough /sneeze hygiene	Practice cough /sneeze hygiene	Open a window for ventilation
	Don't touch your face	Avoid shared items like swings		Don't touch your face	Don't touch your face	Don't share anything like glasses or cups

