

NPHET - Review of Existing Policy Personal Behaviours & Social Distancing

Quantitative Tracker

The latest public opinion tracker data, dated Monday 6 Jul, available online [here](#) shows a higher level of overall worry among the population and a continued increase in the proportion of the population anticipating a second wave.

- Almost three quarters (74%) think that there will be a second wave – up 20% in the past month.
- 41% of the population now believe that the worst of the pandemic is behind us and one in three (32%) believe it is ahead of us.

Qualitative Tracker – Monthly Report, as at end June 2020

The overall narrative of Ireland's response to Covid-19 is framed positively

1. The worst did not come to pass because Ireland prepared and acted correctly
 - The majority believe that Ireland acted early and decisively
 - The fear of the omnipresent threat of this virus was intense and created a huge motivating force to keep the virus at bay, out of homes and families.
2. Ireland had strong unified leaders that navigated the country through crisis
 - Observing the lack of cohesion in other countries caused concern and further galvanised the Irish people behind political and health care leaders
3. Ireland's response to COVID19 was led by healthcare experts
 - Politics as we know it was left aside and the focus placed on adhering to the expert and evidence based advice from NPHET/CMO.
 - This advice did not carry any agenda beyond the public health of the citizens of Ireland
4. The people of Ireland were united under a common goal
 - Collectively Ireland was on a mission to Flatten the Curve
 - The continuous re-enforcement of this mission lived beyond the comms and was embodied in the attitude of the Irish people
5. Communication provided continuous clarity & confidence
 - Information became a source of power over the virus
 - Ireland switched off multiple media sources for a period and focused solely on key health and political figures
 - The clarity, consistency and transparency of information provided confidence and support.
6. The good weather made it manageable
 - The majority believe that the good weather in April and May made living with restrictions easier, lifting the mood and giving people access to the outdoors

The experience of Covid-19 varied across the population

1. Vulnerable People – older or underlying condition

- The threat of serious illness or death felt really and imminent at times for this cohort
- Continue to be extremely cautious and fearful
- Heightened mistrust of others in particular younger cohorts
- Will be hesitant to return to full social and economic engagement
- Medical settings continue to cause worry and stress – going on a needs-must basis only
- A vaccination required before the sense of threat has truly subsided

2. Frontline / Essential Worker Household

- The threat of contracting the virus extremely frightening
- Feared the guilt of passing to a loved one, particularly a vulnerable person
- Anxiety now reducing, but they continue to be diligent and cautious
- Believe workplaces have a significant role to play in providing the necessary equipment and enforcement of public health guidelines
- Nervous of complacency in the general public
- Likely to re-engage with socially and economically

3. Living in urban areas

- The threat of contracting the virus felt more severe in densely populated urban areas
- Perceived greater dependency of public services and therefore a higher level of exposure
- Heightened mistrust of others
- Nervous of complacency in the general public
- Likely to re-engage with socially and economically

4. Parents with young families

- Balancing the demands of working from home, home-schooling and managing the home has been extremely challenging for parents
- It's been exhausting, worrying, feelings of self-blame, but also rewarding. Covid has boosted family life
- Anxiety in relation to how the household dynamic will need to evolve again when childcare facilities and schools re-open
- Exercise, in particular walking, a really important outlet

5. Parents with adults/children with special needs

- Significant concerns that due to lack of interventions or supports the individual's overall well-being will deteriorate (speech, physical abilities, cognitive abilities)
- Anxiety in relation to the viability of services in the future
- Considerable stress and exhaustion on parents who are dependent on services to support the adult/child's needs
- Need support and reassurance they can access the supports they had before restrictions

6. Not Working due to Covid-19

- For many this was a first experience of unemployment – a position many hadn't anticipated finding themselves in
- Covid-19 payment helped minimise some financial concerns

- However, the future outlook is uncertain or very negative for many which is hugely concerning
- Feelings of anxiety and worry
- Negative impact on personal relationships
- Hiding negatives from small children

SUB GROUP: Not Working No Kids

- Boredom, lack of purpose/meaning for those not working and without the distraction of family life or young children

7. Living Alone

- A very challenging time for people living on their own
- Days felt long and isolating
- Digital connection did not satisfy the emotional needs
- Difficult to fill time meaningfully – boredom, snacking, high screen time
- Good intentions but dips in motivation leading to going off track and some sense of failure and disappointment

General areas of concern across the population

- Lack of enforcement of regulations
 - Face coverings
 - Concern that private businesses will become complacent if enforcement is not made mandatory or inspections are not in place
- Fear of complacency among the general public re adherence to public health advice
- Concern in relation to the potential impact of a second wave and the flu season