

COVID – 19 Communication Strategy for ongoing management of the pandemic

Context

COVID-19 is a new disease – there is no vaccine and there is no cure. As guided by [WHO](#), earning public trust to follow public health advice plays a vital role in managing the outbreak.

In the early stages of this pandemic a key communications objective was to build trust in the public health advice through open and transparent communication led by experts and to build awareness of the nature of COVID19 and the central role for citizens in interrupting its transmission.

To date, effective communication from the Department of Health, the HSE and across Government has encouraged the uptake of crucial preventative personal behaviours across the Irish public.

Early and consistent communication has displayed a commitment to transparency to the public and has fostered trust between the public and officials overseeing the public health response.

Behavioural and message fatigue is a risk as we move into the next phases of the response to the pandemic, as the population disengages from COVID-19 related news and begins to take more responsibility for assessing risk and navigating situations in daily life.

Tone of voice in the next phase of communication will emphasise national solidarity, recognising sacrifices made by the public to date and asking them to #HoldFirm and to continue to work with the public health advice to suppress transmission of the virus.

Communication Principles

- Open and transparent communication led by public health experts
- Clear and consistent communication to empower the public to live safely with COVID
- Tone of voice to emphasise national solidarity and collective action
- Cross Government collaboration reinforcing public health advice

Communication Objectives

- Continuing to communicate clearly and consistently on the facts of the disease and the 'why' of public health advice
- educating and empowering on risk perceptions and mitigation
- emphasising the positive gains and past progress
- continuing to maintain a sense of collective action and resilience

Communication Strategy

- Introduce the public to the concept of COVID colour status, with associated individual and collective behaviours, which Government will use to manage a coordinated response to the pandemic for the foreseeable future. The COVID status will be communicated to the public on a regular basis via partnership with mass media, similar to how the weather forecast is communicated.

- Status Red – widespread transmission of the disease
 - Status Orange – regional clusters
 - Status Yellow – individual cases and isolated clusters
 - Status Blue – vaccine
- Living with COVID - Refreshed communications campaign to maintain a sense of collective action and resilience, with additional targeted communication to specific groups, including younger age group (20 – 30 years), to support understanding and inspire action.
 - Flu Vaccine - Phased flu vaccination campaign targeting healthcare workers in their workplaces, and public campaigns aimed at pregnant women, over 70s and medically vulnerable people – as well as introducing the flu vaccine for children aged 2-12 for the first time.
 - Winter and Self-care – Guidance for the public on preparing for winter, taking care of our own health, responding to common winter illnesses in a COVID environment, how to use health services this winter.

Specific Actions

What	When	Responsibility
Launch of COVID 19 Colour Status and associated KPIs to empower the public with information on the status of the virus (See Appendix A1)	w/c 20 July	DoH and GIS
Refresh of COVID 19 Advertising & Digital campaign to address message fatigue	w/c 3 Aug	HSE
Refresh of COVID 19 poster campaign to address message fatigue	w/c 3 Aug	DoH
Social media campaign from a range of influencers, targeted at 20-30 year olds, to further enable this cohort to stay safe with COVID19	w/c 18 Jul	DoH & HSE
Flu vaccination campaign, with specific emphasis on healthcare workers, people aged 70+ and medically vulnerable	Sept - Oct	HSE
Winter and self-care, with specific emphasis on people with long-term illness, older people, parents of small children	Oct - Nov	HSE

Appendix 1 – COVID 19 Colour Status

Note – Concept only - to be refreshed

Coronavirus COVID-19



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

Status Red. Stay at Home. Protect each other.

**Stay within 5km from where you live.
Continue to:**



Wash
your hands well
and often to avoid
contamination



Cover
your mouth and nose
with a tissue or sleeve
when coughing or
sneezing and discard
used tissue safely



Distance
yourself at least
2 metres (6 feet) away
from other people,
especially those who
might be unwell



Wear
face coverings in shops,
healthcare settings and
on public transport.
Not suitable for under
13s and those who have
difficulty wearing them



Avoid
crowds and
crowded places



Know
the symptoms. If you
have them self isolate
and contact your GP
immediately



Stay
within 5km from
where you live



Download
COVID Tracker App

COVID-19 symptoms include

- > high temperature
- > cough
- > breathing difficulty
- > sudden loss of sense of smell or taste
- > flu-like symptoms

COVID-19 STATUS

Widespread Transmission	Regional Outbreaks	Single Cases or Isolated Clusters
-------------------------	--------------------	-----------------------------------

#holdfirm

Ireland's public health advice is guided by WHO and ECDC advice



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Coronavirus COVID-19



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

Status Orange.
Stay Local.
Protect each other.

Stay within your region.
Continue to:



Wash

your hands well
and often to avoid
contamination



Cover

your mouth and nose
with a tissue or sleeve
when coughing or
sneezing and discard
used tissue safely



Distance

yourself at least
2 metres (6 feet) away
from other people,
especially those who
might be unwell



Wear

face coverings in shops,
healthcare settings and
on public transport.
Not suitable for under
13s and those who have
difficulty wearing them



Avoid

crowds and
crowded places



Know

the symptoms. If you
have them self isolate
and contact your GP
immediately



Stay

within your region



Download

COVID Tracker App

COVID-19 symptoms include

- > high temperature
- > cough
- > breathing difficulty
- > sudden loss of sense of smell or taste
- > flu-like symptoms

COVID-19
STATUS

Widespread
Transmission

Regional
Outbreaks

Single Cases or
Isolated Clusters

#holdfirm

Ireland's public health advice is guided by WHO and ECDC advice



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Coronavirus **COVID-19**



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

Status Yellow.
Stay safe.
Protect each other.

Continue to:



Wash

your hands well
and often to avoid
contamination



Cover

your mouth and nose
with a tissue or sleeve
when coughing or
sneezing and discard
used tissue safely



Distance

yourself at least
2 metres (6 feet) away
from other people,
especially those who
might be unwell



Wear

face coverings in shops,
healthcare settings and
on public transport.
Not suitable for under
13s and those who have
difficulty wearing them



Avoid

crowds and
crowded places



Know

the symptoms. If you
have them self isolate
and contact your GP
immediately



Download

COVID Tracker App

COVID-19 symptoms include

- > high temperature
- > cough
- > breathing difficulty
- > sudden loss of sense of smell or taste
- > flu-like symptoms

COVID-19
STATUS

Widespread
Transmission

Regional
Outbreaks

Single Cases or
Isolated Clusters

#holdfirm

Ireland's public health advice is guided by WHO and ECDC advice



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Coronavirus COVID-19



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

Status Blue. Post Vaccine.

Until you receive the vaccine,
continue to:



Wash

your hands well
and often to avoid
contamination



Cover

your mouth and nose
with a tissue or sleeve
when coughing or
sneezing and discard
used tissue safely



Distance

yourself at least
2 metres (6 feet) away
from other people,
especially those who
might be unwell



Wear

face coverings in shops,
healthcare settings and
on public transport.
Not suitable for under
13s and those who have
difficulty wearing them



Avoid

crowds and
crowded places



Know

the symptoms. If you
have them self isolate
and contact your GP
immediately



Download

COVID Tracker App

COVID-19 symptoms include

- > high temperature
- > cough
- > breathing difficulty
- > sudden loss of sense of smell or taste
- > flu-like symptoms

COVID-19
STATUS

Widespread
Transmission

Regional
Outbreaks

Single Cases or
Isolated Clusters

Vaccine

#holdfirm

Ireland's public health advice is guided by WHO and ECDC advice



Riailtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

COVID-19 Daily Report

5-day average	16 April	10 Jun	17 Jun	24 Jun	1 Jul	8 Jul
No. cases per 100,000 population <small>14 day incidence</small>	11.2 (?)	10.6	5.7	3.8	3.3	3.7
Cases confirmed per day	559	17	19	9	13	14
Hospital in-patients	865	116	73	40	21	19
ICU confirmed cases	144	34	24	14	12	10
Deaths confirmed per day	33	5	2	2	2	1