



Mr. Simon Harris TD,
Minister for Health,
Department of Health,
Miesian Plaza,
50-58 Lower Baggot Street,
Dublin 2

11th June 2020

Via email to Private Secretary to the Minister for Health

Dear Minister,

I write further to today's meeting of the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET) at which there was continued consideration of issues in relation to non-essential travel from overseas in the context of easing the public health restrictions currently in place.

The epidemiological data indicates that Ireland is currently in a state of low and stable transmission of COVID-19. As the number of indigenous cases continues to decline, the relative risk of importation of cases from overseas increases.

In recent months, due to the global pandemic, Ireland, like many other countries, has experienced historically low international passenger numbers which are estimated to be at 1%-2% of normal levels. Together with the general movement restrictions within the country, this has minimised the risk of imported cases spreading the disease to date.

However, with the easing of restrictions, it is likely that international passenger numbers may now begin to increase significantly, which will increase the risk of imported cases.

Having continued to identify this growing risk of imported cases of COVID-19 from non-essential overseas travel, the NPHET reiterates the public health objective to eliminate this risk insofar as is possible, subject to any legal issues which may arise.

In addition, following discussions at today's meeting, the NPHET recommended the development and implementation of a national communications campaign to increase compliance with the current recommendations and guidance with regard to the use of face-coverings by the general public in retail outlets, on public transport and in other public locations in which it is difficult to maintain social distancing or where this distance cannot be guaranteed.

I also enclose a copy of the letter which has been forwarded to the HSE CEO arising from today's NPHET meeting.

I would be happy to discuss further, should you wish.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Holohan', written over a horizontal line.

Dr Tony Holohan
Chief Medical Officer

Chair of the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency Team

cc. Ms Elizabeth Canavan, Department of the Taoiseach and Chair of the Senior Officials Group for COVID-19