



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland

**29 April 2020**

Daily briefing on Government measures in response to COVID-19

Delivered by Elizabeth Canavan

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**Check against Delivery**

## **Introduction and up-to-date Public Health Guidance**

Good Morning.

As usual, I will begin by reminding you all of the vital public health advice helping us to slow the spread of the virus:

- Wash hands regularly and thoroughly.
- Use good cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Observe social distancing measures.

Once again, I want to thank everyone who is working to comply with the restrictions and that is the majority of people. Your efforts are very much appreciated.

As I have said here before, we really do appreciate how difficult this is. Also, to remind you that whatever your situation, whether you are trying to manage new working arrangements, if you are a parent at home with your children or if you are cocooning, you can check in with [gov.ie/together](https://www.gov.ie/together), or search #inthistgether on social media for tips, advice and help on minding your mental wellbeing, keeping active and staying connected.

## Continuation of HSE services

As I have confirmed previously, the normal activity of the health service is continuing insofar as is possible at this time. We have seen an increase in the number of people attending appointments, but want to reiterate that it is vital to still attend hospitals as directed and to call emergency services in the event of incidents such as heart attack or stroke.

The HSE have a regularly updated list on their website of every hospital and any disruptions or changes they have had to make to normal operations in light of COVID-19, such as visitor restrictions and outpatient appointments.

Unless otherwise indicated, normal services for patients are still available in hospitals.

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## **Business/Industry/Agriculture**

### **Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme**

Over 50,400 employers are now registered with Revenue for the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme.

The cumulative value of payments made to employers under the scheme is €652 million.

Almost 400,000 employees have now received at least one payment under the scheme. This does not include additional employees who may receive a subsidy as a result of payments generated today.

Today (29th April), Revenue has generated further payments to employers under the scheme of €52.2 million.

These payments will be in the bank accounts of the majority of the employers tomorrow (30th April).

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# Community Measures & Supports

## Community Fora

Over Monday and Tuesday, the Community Call Fora received **approximately 2,100 calls nationally**. They made over 600 follow-up calls to people who have contacted them.

Nationally, since the end of March, the Community Call Fora have received approximately 25,000 calls and have made over 11,000 follow-up calls.

Again, we encourage anyone who needs help, knows someone who needs help, or wants to volunteer to give help to contact their local forum.

Remember, you can find your local helpline on gov.ie. or you can call ALONE on 0818 222 024.

## Garda National Vetting Bureau Statistics

We know that we have new employees and redeployed staff working across the public and private healthcare system as well as volunteers working with us on our response to Covid-19.

In all of these settings, we are being supported by the Garda National Vetting Bureau.

Since 12th March, they have completed a total of 17,082 Vetting Applications which are COVID-19 Related, of which over 6,000 were for the HSE.

The Garda National Vetting Bureau (GNVB) continues to prioritize all of the above COVID-19 related/Medical Vetting Applications to ensure there is no backlog.

All applications have a current turn-around time of 1 working day once received by the Garda National Vetting Bureau.

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# Children and Families/Education

## NEPS Resources

The Department of Education and Skills' National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) has launched a range of new material as part of its online resources for parents and children while schools are closed. Guidance for young people on how to Stay Active and Connected, Stay Responsible and Informed and Stay Positive and Calm has been produced through a series of animations that will be distributed to schools and on social media.

NEPS has also provided:

- Videos containing information for parents supporting children to create new routines at home.
- A relaxation podcast.
- Guidance on Teacher Wellbeing and Self-Care during school closures.

For further detail, please go to [gov.ie](http://gov.ie)

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## Issues & Concerns

### Report from An Garda Síochána

An Garda Síochána continue to operate a community-based policing service with a focus on protecting the vulnerable. Their approach is to engage, educate and encourage with enforcement as a last resort.

There have been interactions with hundreds of thousands of people, with the vast majority adhering to the public health guidelines.

Enforcement powers under new regulations introduced during this crisis have been used on 76 occasions between the 8th April – 25th April.

All of these matters are referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for independent decision on prosecution, a number have already appeared before the Courts.

An Garda Síochána continue to use other relevant criminal legislation powers where that's more appropriate.

It is important to acknowledge that the majority of people are complying with the regulations.

### Dublin Bus

Dublin Bus passenger numbers for Tuesday 28th April were 57,858. Monday's figure was similar at 57,786.

Tuesday's figure represents an increase of 3.5% on the previous 3-week average of 55,889.

It is important to note that strict social distancing provisions are in place on Dublin Bus.

### Compliance with Public Health Advice

Data produced from an Amarach Survey of 1,250 people, conducted on Monday, 27 April reveals:

- 89% of people are staying at home rather than going out

- 94% of people are washing their hands more often than they used to
- 90% of people are social distancing in queues
- 78% are coughing into their elbow - a new behaviour that the public has adopted since Covid19

## **Illegal Dumping**

Illegal dumping by a minority is having a negative effect on many local communities. Now more than ever, we need to protect our communities and manage our waste responsibly.

Household waste services are operating normally.

While enforcement in this area is primarily a matter for local authorities, the continued support of Government funding facilitates a wider approach in tackling the issue. This includes the launch of a national radio campaign to raise awareness on the issue of dumping and to provide guidance on where to go for information on managing your household waste. The campaign starts on regional stations today and on National stations from next week

For information on managing your waste go to [mywaste.ie](http://mywaste.ie)

## **Direct Provision**

We understand that there are particular concerns around looking after people who are living in Direct Provision during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We want to assure you that the government and the HSE are working closely together to support the health and welfare of asylum seekers and refugees availing of the State's accommodation services.

The Department and the HSE are following the Health Protection Surveillance Centre COVID-19 guidance for Homeless and other vulnerable group settings including Direct Provision settings.

Together, a range of measures have been put in place. The Department of Justice and Equality and the HSE will continue to work together for the benefit of residents.

## Finally

Today at three o'clock Minister Humphreys and colleagues will talk to you about the range of research being done by institutions and agencies on a cross-government basis, all coming together and working in response to Covid-19.

Thank you