

Press Release: For Immediate Release

13th March 2020

Irish Rural Link Urge High Risk Groups to Keep Safe during the Coronavirus Outbreak

Irish Rural Link – the national network representing the interest of rural communities is urging older people and other vulnerable to heed the advice of Government and reduce social contact during the Covid-19 outbreak.

We also ask for people who are well to call in on older and vulnerable neighbours, collect groceries, fuel, medicines etc for them to limit their need to go out. Keep in contact with those who you know are self-isolating and arrange with them to drop supplies at the door.

If people are feeling unwell, take the advice of the HSE and call ahead to your GP surgery, do not arrive without prior calling. And we ask neighbours and family to ensure that people have their GP number or call the HSE Helpline on 1850 24 1850.

We also urge older people to contact a family member or neighbour if they are feeling unwell or are self-isolating and need food or fuel and to not feel they are burdening others. Also, if they have a personal alarm, to wear it on their body and keep their EIRCODE beside the phone or a place that it is visible to them.

Services such as Meals on Wheels and other essential community services are continuing to be provided and arrangements can be made to have meal delivered to door if person is self-isolating or doesn't want to risk contact with people. IRL would like to commend the work of community groups providing such essential services to communities and continue to do so at this time.

CEO Seamus Boland says *'When there is a crisis, communities around the country pull together and look out for each other, we are now in a crisis and are calling on communities to stay safe and take care of those who are most vulnerable at this time'*

We would also advise people to keep up to date with daily announcements from the Government and HSE. Details of these updated measures can be found here <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ea1c30-updated-measures-in-response-to-covid-19-coronavirus/> and to use trusted sites. Information about Covid-19 can be found at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html> <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/> <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/>

Also trusted social media/twitter accounts and to retweet from these accounts:

@HSELive
@hpscireland
@roinnslaite
@CMOireland

Again to note that if you or anyone you know are concerned about symptoms contact either your GP or the HSE Helpline on 1850 24 1850.

Alone, the organisation for older people, have a COVID-19 helpline that people can call with any concerns. The number is 0818 222024 open from 8am to 8pm.

-Ends-

For further information, please contact (anytime):

Seamus Boland (Chief Executive) 086 2491153 or Louise Lennon (Policy and Communications Officer) 086 1069244

About Irish Rural Link:

Irish Rural Link represents the interests of locally based rural groups in disadvantaged and marginalised rural areas by highlighting problems, advocating appropriate policies, sharing experiences and examples of good practice. It has a membership of over 600 rural community groups dedicated to sustainable rural development and represents rural communities at a national and international level.