

Covid-19: Estimating the burden of symptomatic disease in the community and the proportion of those with symptoms suggestive of covid-19 and their household contacts who test positive for Covid-19 infection.

Information sheet for Research Participants

You are being invited to take part in a telephone survey. This forms part of a research project conducted by researchers at University College Cork and Ipsos MRBI a market research company entitled: *“Estimating the burden of symptomatic disease in the community and the impact of public health measures on physical, mental and social wellbeing”*.

This sheet provides information about the research and what is involved in participating. Please ask us if you would like more information.

❖ **What is the project about?**

Following the emergence of Covid-19 and its pandemic spread, Ireland in common with countries worldwide has implemented unprecedented physical distancing measures to contain the virus and reduce its impact, including a national stay at home order and travel restrictions for all but those involved in health and other essential services. The purpose of this research project is to estimate the current burden of Covid-19 infection in the community, including in members of the public who may have symptoms but have not made contact with the health service. We are conducting a short telephone survey with a random sample of people living in Ireland. It is in this context we are inviting you to take part.

❖ **What is the aim of the project?**

We aim to get a more precise measure or estimate of the prevalence or proportion of individuals in the population with symptoms suggestive of Covid-19 infection and on the proportion of these individuals (with symptoms) and persons living in the same household who test positive for Covid-19 infection. This information will provide a deeper understanding to the HSE, including the National Health Protection Surveillance Centre of the current burden of Covid-19 infection in the community and the likely future course of the pandemic in Ireland.

❖ **Why take part in the project? What could be your benefits? Are there any risks?**

We hope that with your participation in this interview, we will improve our understanding of the overall level of Covid-19 infection in Ireland, including the level of infection in persons without symptoms. The results from this project will be communicated to policymakers, health professionals and other scientists through publications and briefings. If you or another member of your household have symptoms suggestive of Covid-19 you will be offered a telephone call from a public health doctor or another health professional with expertise in Covid-19 who will advise you on the need to contact your General Practitioner or the hospital depending on your symptoms, help organise a test for Covid-19 and give you and other members of the household detailed advice on how best to limit the risk of spread of the infection through self-isolation and self- quarantine as appropriate. Given the nature of this research and limited contact, we do not envisage any risks for respondents.

❖ **What would taking part in the project mean for you?**

Participation in this project is voluntary. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to provide verbal consent that will confirm your decision. You will be asked to complete a short telephone survey, which

will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. You are free to withdraw from the study and request that your data be deleted at any time, even if you have already agreed to take part, and you do not have to provide a reason for not wishing to continue. You have the right to request a copy of your information, amend your information, or have your information removed from our database. If you decide to withdraw, you can do so by contacting [researcher name] identified below.

If you or any member of your household report symptoms suggestive of Covid-19 infection, we will ask for your telephone contact details and you will be offered a follow-up call within 24-48 hours from a Public Health Medicine doctor or another experienced health professional who will provide advice and support on self-care, referral for clinical assessment and testing and advice on how best to limit the risk of spread of the infection. We will also ask you for the name and address of your General Practitioner and we will follow-up with your General Practitioner to let him or her know that you and members of your household have been advised to seek testing for Covid-19. You will be contacted with the results of any test for Covid-19. We will also ask you for your permission to follow-up with the laboratory for the results of your test to help us with our research.

❖ **What information will be collected?**

You will be asked to complete a short telephone survey. In the telephone survey, we will collect information on a range of topics, such as details of your age and gender, your occupation and employment status, the number of people living in your household and questions on current employment and recent travel. We will also ask you some questions on whether or not you or other members of your household have long-standing chronic health problems and whether you or other members of the household have had any symptoms that might suggest Covid-19 infection over the past two weeks.

❖ **How will my information be used?**

The information you provide will be used by researchers and policy makers to improve our understanding of the overall level of Covid-19 infection in Ireland. Any contact details you may provide will remain confidential and only available to the research team for future contact if you have provided permission to do so. Once the project is complete, these data will be compiled and summarised in a report and other publications to disseminate findings. Before any findings are entered into a report, any details that could be used to identify you will be removed.

❖ **Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

Yes, only the core project team will know that you are taking part in this project. Any information you provide will be kept confidential and be de-identified as well as processed and stored securely for a period of 10 years in accordance with national (Irish Data Protection Legislation) and European (EU General Data Protection Regulation) data protection laws. This means that we have put in place measures and procedures to make sure that your information remains secure.

- Any information that is submitted to us will be stored on UCC secure servers and all electronic data files will be encrypted and double-password protected.
- Before any findings are entered into a report or an academic paper, any details that could be used to identify you or other members of your household will be removed.
- Your contact details will be stored separately from the data collected in the telephone survey.
- Any information that you provide will only be used for the purpose of this project.

- Further information on the role of Ipsos MRBI in this research study and on the steps taken by Ipsos MRBI to protect and ensure your privacy and that of members of your household is provided in a separate Privacy Notice which is available from Ipsos and UCC as detailed below.

❖ **What will happen to the results of the project?**

The information from the project will be analysed by the research team in a way that allows us to develop a mathematical model that incorporates the outputs from the telephone surveys to inform decisions on the optimal levels and duration of physical distancing measures and thereby support the ongoing work of the Irish Covid-19 Epidemiological Modelling Group. We will also use findings in an anonymised way in publications and presentations to share the information with healthcare professionals, scientists and policymakers and the wider community.

❖ **Who is organising and funding the project?**

The project is being run by the School of Public Health, University College Cork and funded by the Health Research Board.

❖ **Would you like to have more information?**

More information about the project is available from University College Cork and Ipsos MRBI:

How can I contact University College Cork and Ipsos MRBI about this survey and/or my personal data?

Contact University College Cork

Email: i.perry@ucc.ie with "Covid-19 Ipsos Survey" in the email subject line

Telephone 021-4205500/4205506

Post: School of Public Health
Western Gateway Building
Cork T12 XF62

Contact Ipsos MRBI

Email: dpo.ireland@ipsos.com with "UCC Covid-19 Survey" in the email subject line

Post: UCC Covid-19 Survey
Data Protection Officer
Ipsos MRBI
Block 3 Blackrock Business Park
Blackrock
Co Dublin