

---

# Speech by the Taoiseach with update on latest COVID-19 public health measures

Published: 10 April 2020

From: [Department of the Taoiseach](#) and [An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar](#)

## Check against delivery

Good afternoon everyone.

Throughout our history, Good Friday has had a special meaning. It's a day associated with suffering, and sacrifice, and sorrow. And also with new beginnings. The promise of rebirth and renewal and better days to come.

It's also the day an agreement was signed in Belfast to bring peace to our island ending the troubles in the North.

During the worst year of those Troubles the poet Seamus Heaney spoke about what was happening and predicted that 'if we winter this one out, we can summer anywhere'.

I know these words have provided inspiration to many Irish people as we deal with this Emergency. They remind us that we are in this together, we can get through it, and better days will come.

Thank you for your forbearance and for the sacrifices you have made so far.

I know many people are feeling frustrated, and I know the fine weather makes it even harder. We want to be outside, we want to be with friends and family, and we want to feel like we can go anywhere. We want to be free.

I know it is difficult, but every sacrifice we make is helping to save someone's life. It's making sure that our health service isn't overwhelmed. It's making things a little easier for those working on the frontline and all those backing them up whether its support staff, administrators, or partners at home.

Because most people have heeded the advice of the experts we have been able to interrupt the spread of the virus. We have been able to shelter our most vulnerable and protect them.

Your sacrifices are making a difference. We have slowed the spread of the virus but unfortunately we have not stopped it. We all know people who are suffering or grieving at this time. Too many have died and more sadly will die and get sick before we are through this.

Today's message is that we cannot be complacent and we cannot lose focus. What we are doing is difficult, but it is making a difference, so we have to keep going.

We need to persevere and we need to maintain our discipline and resolve.

The restrictions we introduced two weeks ago were set to expire on Sunday. Today the expert recommendation is to extend them for a further three weeks, until Tuesday May 5th.

The Government has accepted this recommendation.

I know many of you would like to know when things will go back to normal and life will be as it was. We are working towards that time and we are planning carefully so that we get there safely.

The truth is, nobody knows for certain when that will be or how our lives will be different when that comes.

All we can do is take one day at a time. To think of others. And to choose hope and solidarity over self-interest and fear.

Your sacrifice will save lives. What is an inconvenience for some will be a lifesaver for others. So I am calling on everyone to do what is being asked of them.

To be tolerant and compassionate, and to think about each other before we think about ourselves.

Nothing greater will be asked of any of us.

In one of his best collections of poems, Heaney celebrated the human chain of help that can bring about an almost miraculous recovery.

As Heaney wrote, we were ‘all the more together for having had to turn and walk away’. In the days ahead we must continue to turn and walk away from each other and from doing the things we would like to do. But we will be all the more together for having done so.

Stay strong, stay safe and stay at home.

Thank you.

**Ends**