

Department of the Taoiseach launches ESRI SAM behavioural study

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The Department of the Taoiseach and the ESRI have launched SAM, The Social Activity Measure, which is a behavioural study that records the public response to the risk of Covid-19 infection over time.

The Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD said:

‘I am delighted to launch this key research initiative. As our vaccination programme ramps up, we continue to rely on our behaviour as the best defence against contracting and spreading Covid-19. This research will play an important part in helping us to understand more fully how restrictions affect our behaviour, ensuring that data and insight is the foundation for all of our policy decisions and communications approaches.’

Designed by the ESRI’s Behavioural Research Unit (BRU), SAM is an anonymous, interactive, online study that surveys people about their recent activity. The study offers insight into where and how risks of transmission arise. SAM aims to inform policy regarding the opening of parts of the economy and society, while keeping Covid-19 under control.

The insights generated in the survey will complement other data sources such as the Amárach Public Opinion survey, and will ensure that Government has a more complete picture of how people are behaving as well as peoples’ attitudes with respect to restrictions, what is working well and what may need to be adjusted at a given point in time.

The study will collect data from 1,000 respondents every two weeks. As well as informing policy and communications decisions relating to the Government’s response to Covid-19, the results from the research will be published on gov.ie.

Results of the first wave will be published on Friday 19th February.