

it's safer to work from home

with high rates of absences as the sub-variant sweeps the country.

Mr Donnelly said on Monday that extreme measures would be needed to curb its spread and these were not on the cards.

Another 14,549 new cases of Covid were reported yesterday, including 5,962 which were confirmed by a PCR test.

The number of patients with Covid-19 in hospital – around half of whom are there due to complications of the virus – fell slightly to 1,605, although this could be due to the “weekend effect” and lower discharges.

The number of Covid-19 patients in intensive care went down to 50 from 54 on Monday, signalling a possible turn in the current wave.

However, the fear is that

Government signalled no return to mandatory official restrictions

Covid-19 hospitalisations will continue to rise over the next two weeks before reaching a plateau and then falling slowly.

It means the disruption to hospitals – with the major impact on waiting list patients whose care has been postponed – could potentially continue through much of April.

Meanwhile, the HSE said yesterday its emergency ambulance services were experiencing a large volume of calls.

“If you are calling 112/999 for a non-urgent or non-life threatening emergency, you may experience delays in getting an ambulance due to calls from other patients whose emergency care needs have been triaged at a higher level,” it said.

“The emergency ambulance services operate a priority dispatch system to ensure paramedics and ambulances are dispatched to the most seriously ill and injured patients first in order of their priority.

“All callers are advised to ring back if the patient’s condition changes or deteriorates.”

A spokesperson asked patients who no longer need an ambulance to let the service know so that the limited resources can be diverted.

If the situation is not serious, people are asked to consider a GP or minor injury unit or pharmacist.

Sinead Ryan Notebook

THIS IS MY SECOND BOUT WITH COVID BUT A LOT HAS CHANGED SINCE THE FIRST SCARE – THE MAIN THING BEING VACCINES



WELL, I have the dreaded lurgy. It’s the second time round and I’m grand, thanks for asking.

The first time I succumbed was at the very start of Lockdown #1. You’ll recall we were all scared out of our wits by Leo channelling his inner Morgan Freeman in Washington. We had no idea what this awful virus could do, but we knew it could kill. We still know it can, of course, but we also know it probably won’t.

My reaction then and now is different. At the end of March 2020 my sense of taste went immediately; it was the only symptom for 24 hours. It was weird, uncomfortable and a bit chilling. We weren’t thinking it was “just the flu” back then; it was a sinister disease and body bags piling up in Italy – then Spain did nothing to quell that view.

It was horrific – no need to remind anyone of that. To even say you had Covid was to invite shock. Three of us came down with it, and since there was nowhere to go, we circled around each other for a fortnight, carefully monitoring symptoms, disinfecting surfaces and each other.

PCR tests were only just getting off the ground, there were no antigen tests, we weren’t expected to wear masks and everything was closed anyway. We lived in fear.

I continued to work, because I could and we waited it out.

Groceries got dropped off by Son #2, people phoned to commiserate and in all my friend groups I was the first to “get it”.

We hadn’t heard of Zoom back then and guards were on the streets stopping people from going anywhere (even now, that sounds like an unbelievable thing to me).

This week, this time, it’s a bit of a pain pivoting some in-person work. I’ve had to reschedule a couple

of things, move them online and cancelled dinner with a friend. No big deal. Nobody batted an eyelid, save to ask how I was feeling. In fact, at the moment, it seems counting the people who don’t have Covid would be easier.

The game-changer, of course, was the arrival of vaccines and I thank science every day that I’m among the most protected on the planet. This was always going to be the difference in how the pandemic played out, and we cannot take for granted that we were going to get here. I’ve been listening back to some early interviews with experts (who would become celebrity virologists – which I bet they didn’t reckon on), and they were dancing nervously around the topic of vaccines.

Honestly, the truth was they simply



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didn’t know if one could be generated, never mind in a timeframe before millions died.

So it strikes me now, we really must change the advice on isolating. Employers cannot continue to have chunks of staff out constantly as we “live with Covid”.

Two years ago we didn’t believe worse things than Covid would hit the world. We were wrong.

If we’re living with Covid, let us do so with sensible precaution: bring back masks indoors and on transport, give annual boosters and you turn up for work unless you feel too sick to do so.

TRANSPORT (RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE) ACT 2001, as amended

Railway works and all works necessary to eliminate and, where necessary, upgrade seven numbered level crossings and carry out all associated and ancillary works along a 24-kilometre section on the Dublin to Cork Railway Line.

In compliance with a request by An Bord Pleanála, Córas Iompair Éireann (CIÉ) hereby advises that, with regard to the inaccessibility of certain documents on the project website, due to a technical issue, it has been requested by the Board to advise an addendum to the original public notice to allow a further time period for the making of submissions/observations in relation to the railway order application.

As stated in the original public notice, the application is accompanied by documents including the following:

- A draft of the proposed Railway Order entitled the “Dublin to Cork Railway Line (Elimination and Upgrade) of Level Crossings between Limerick Junction and Mallow Order 2021”;
- Plans of the proposed railway works;
- A book of reference to the plan (indicating the identity of the owners and of the occupiers of the lands described in the plan);
- A statement of the likely effects on the environment (an “Environmental Impact Assessment Report”) of the proposed railway works;
- A Natura Impact Statement.

Inspection of Draft Railway Order and Accompanying Documents

A copy of the Draft Railway Order and documents accompanying the application may be inspected during normal office and opening hours (with the exception of Charleville Station where the viewings will be made by appointment via the project email address cllc@irishrail.ie or by calling 01 703 4451) **from the 11 April 2022 for the duration of 6 weeks until the 23 May 2022** at:

- An Bord Pleanála**, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin, D01 V902
- Limerick City and County Council**, Dooradoyle Road, Dooradoyle, Limerick, V94 WV78
- Cork County Council**, County Hall, Carrigrohane Road, Cork, T12 R2NC
- Iarnród Éireann**, Charleville Station, Railway Road, Charleville, Co. Cork, P56 C654

These documents may also be viewed at www.irishrail.ie/CorkLineLevelCrossings

Purchase of Documents

Copies or extracts from the documents which accompanied the application, including the Environment Impact Assessment Report, the Non-Technical Summary of same and the Natura Impact Statement, may be purchased on payment of a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making such copy or extract from:

- Cork Line Level Crossings Project**, C/O Jacobs, Mahon Industrial Estate, Blackrock, Cork, T12 HY54
- An Bord Pleanála**, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin, D01 V902
- Limerick City and County Council**, Dooradoyle Road, Dooradoyle, Limerick, V94 WV78
- Cork County Council**, County Hall, Carrigrohane Road, Cork, T12 R2NC

Written Submissions

An Bord Pleanála will consider any submission in relation to the proposed Railway Order or in relation to the likely effects on the environment and the likely significant effects in the area concerned on European Sites, if any, of the proposed railway works which are submitted in writing to it by any person and accompanied by a fee of €50 (This fee is not payable by certain prescribed bodies or by persons whose lands may be acquired under the order or by persons who previously made a submission to the Board in respect of the railway order application). Submissions must be lodged no later than **5.30 p.m. on the 23 May 2022** and must be addressed to An Bord Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 and marked “**Dublin to Cork Railway Line (Elimination and Upgrade) of Level Crossings between Limerick Junction and Mallow Order 2021**”.

Oral Hearing

An Bord Pleanála may at its absolute discretion hold an oral hearing into the application for a Railway Order.

Judicial Review

A person may question the validity of any such decision by An Board Pleanála may make by way of an application for judicial review in accordance with section 47 and 47A of the Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001 (as amended and substituted) and under Order 84 of the Rules of the Superior Courts (S.I. No. 15 of 1986 as amended) and practical information on the review mechanism can be accessed under the heading “Publications – Judicial Review Notice” on the Board’s website www.pleanala.ie or on the Citizen’s Information website www.citizensinformation.ie.

Dated 28 March 2022

Further information is available from:

Cork Line Level Crossings Project, C/O Jacobs, Mahon Industrial Estate, Blackrock, Cork T12 HY54

E-mail: cllc@irishrail.ie

Web: www.irishrail.ie/CorkLineLevelCrossings

Henry. In particular he has cited the need for people to get vaccinated and avail of a booster shot. The figures for Covid-19 patients in hospital still showed the unvaccinated were disproportionately represented, he said.

A significant number in intensive care have not had a booster. More than 700,000 of over-16s are eligible for a booster vaccine.

There is also the issue of people with symptoms not staying at home. Then there is the ongoing hurdle of hospital capacity. Extra general beds and ICU beds have been added since the pandemic but they are behind target. And for now they are still far behind the level of demand with Covid infection control measures causing major disruption.

Heeding guidance: Ivan Leong from Dublin who still wears a face mask.

PHOTO: STEVE HUMPHREYS