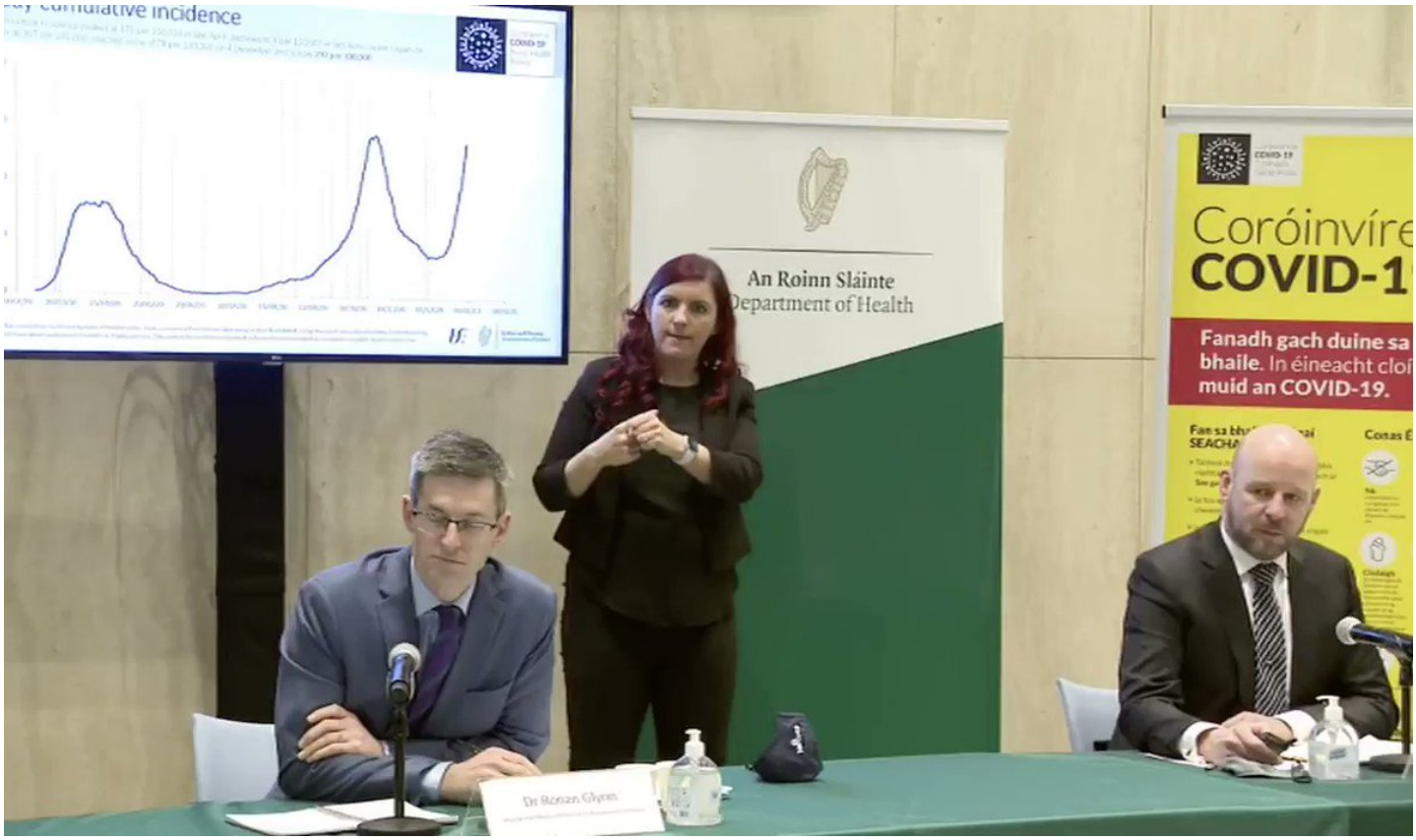
# Twitter Thread by Mark_Coughlan

**Mark_Coughlan**
@Mark_Coughlan

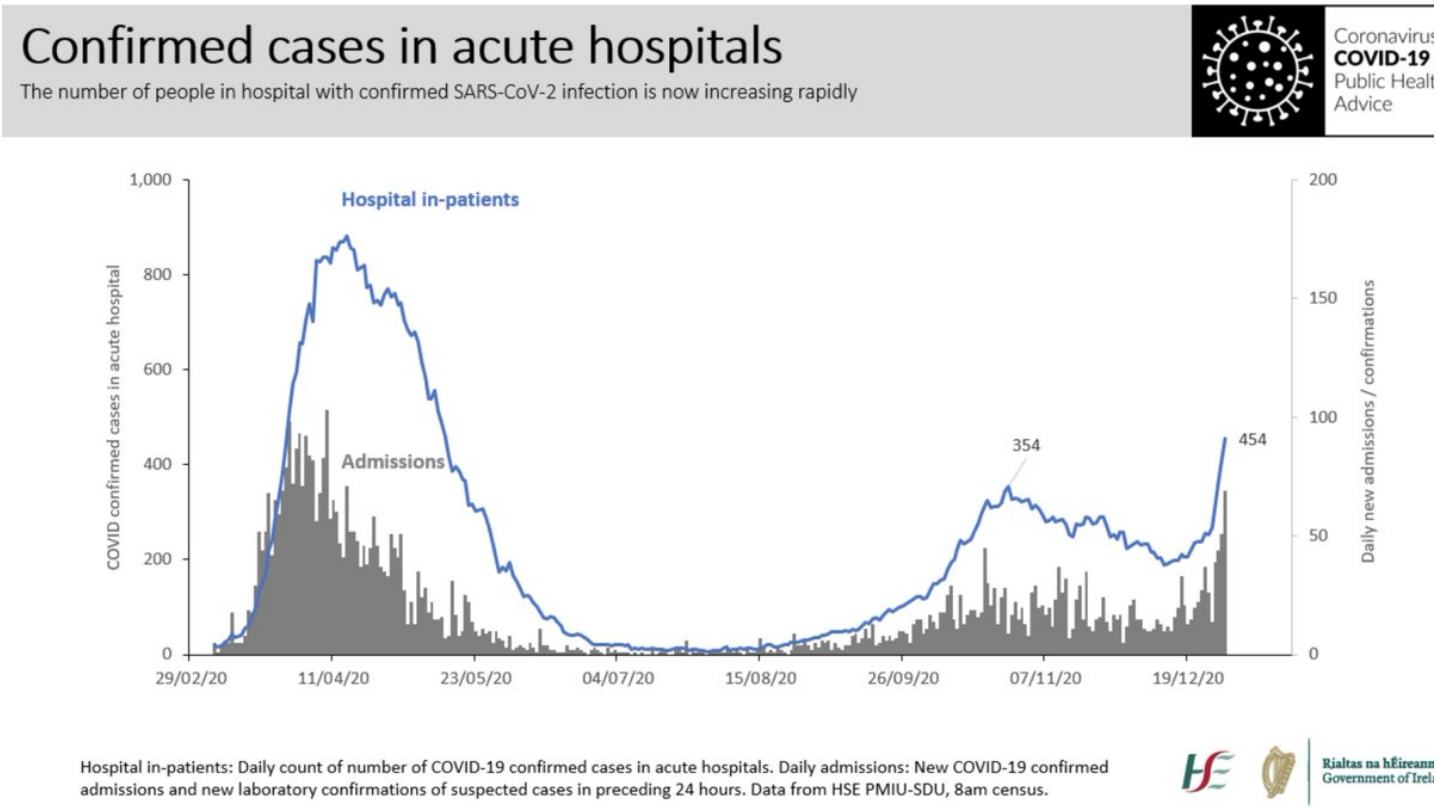
**Thread contd: Gap was 4,000 yesterday. Now it's much bigger again.**

**The system wasn't designed to handle the influx of testing, Prof Nolan said he's accounted for it in models.**

**This means confirmed cases are not representative. It's worse than it looks, if looking at just cases.**




Hospitalisations are more concrete, you're either there and positive or you're not. The current trend is not good, see images: the upward tick isn't as lagged behind the case increase as it was in previous waves.




What are we looking at for January?

The ESRI provides health capacity modelling. If we get R back below 1 very soon, we'll be looking at 700 to 1000 people in hospital with Covid at the one time in January.

Early pandemic peak was 880.

https://t.co/Ay2RsAtMaR

If it's worse than that - something Prof Nolan said is 'hard to countenance' yesterday, the system would be under further strain.

Last time we peaked like that the health system was essentially closed to nearly all but Covid, the aim is avoid needing to do that.

Other parts of the system are already straining. In the short term, NPHET has decided that testing capacity should be focused more on people who are symptomatic: Close contacts of confirmed cases won't now automatically be tested.

It makes it more important to restrict movements if you're a close contact of a case - asymptomatic people might not think they're positive but spread the virus to others.

That's one thing, but as they haven't been tested, we won't in any sense be tracking *their* contacts.

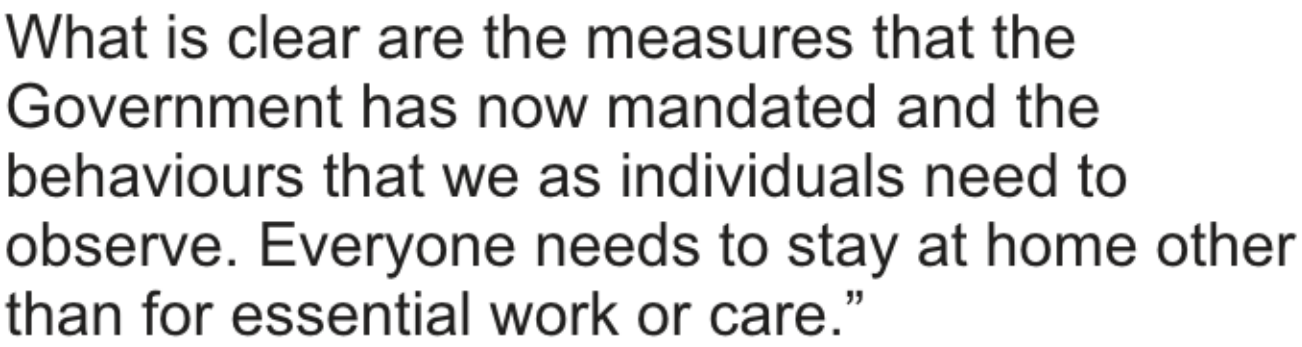
And that would make getting the virus - which the head of the HSE this morning said it 'rampant' at this stage in the community - back under control even more difficult.

https://t.co/wunyr99AOa

> 2021 will be brighter for sure. But firstly we need to get the spread of the virus back under control. Positivity rates yesterday at 22% with some centres reaching 50%. It's quite rampant & high risk. But we can turn this around again. Let's do it. @HSELive #COVID19
>
> — Paul Reid (@paulreiddublin) January 1, 2021

In the meantime, we're level five until at least Jan 31. Despite some disagreement as to exactly how we got here, it appears NPHET and govt are back broadly on the same page for now.

Press release today, Dr Holohan, the message isn't complex:




But already extension is being flagged. Best case modelling presented has cases around 800 by then. The case numbers aren't currently representative. They should be more representative in coming few weeks.

Hospitalisations and ICU figures are most relevant for next period.

More info is awaited on variant prevalence here: expected next week.

There is no indication it makes people sicker than any other version, and scientists are confident the vaccines will still work with it.

In the coming week, NPHET is warning that case figures will be 'very high'. After that the hope is they will begin to flatten out, and then trend downwards. There's still New Years Eve (albeit at level five) to play into the infections detected, then hospitalisations.

At this stage, it's not complicated. Stay home as much as you can, limit your contacts to your household and bubble, and seek a test if you've symptoms. Hard few weeks ahead, but Ireland's done it before.

Hopefully that's brought both you who read this far up to date.

[Thread starts here if you want to go back to the top. https://t.co/8i9X0143Bj]

> Mega thread on seismic few days of the pandemic in Ireland.
>
> \U0001f4cdThe govt implemented level five.
>
> \U0001f4cdMore info about the UK variant.
>
> \U0001f4cdAnd NPHET held one of the most important briefings in months on New Years Eve.
>
> What's happened and where does it leave us now?
>
> — Mark_Coughlan (@Mark_Coughlan) January 1, 2021

More specifics on the analysis of swabs for the presence of the variant just tweeted here by @CillianDeGascun. This is specifics on the ~90 mentioned above. https://t.co/x82e0C2SF0

> Further testing this week of #SARSCoV2 samples dating from #December 23rd to 29th has detected 9 additional #UKvariant cases in #Ireland. This brings the total number of cases identified @nvrlucdireland to 16 (of 169 tested to date) 1/2 https://t.co/gBEy0VjXO7
>
> — Cillian De Gascun (@CillianDeGascun) January 1, 2021