

Twitter Thread by Naomi O'Leary



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@NaomiOhReally



Thread on something really important.

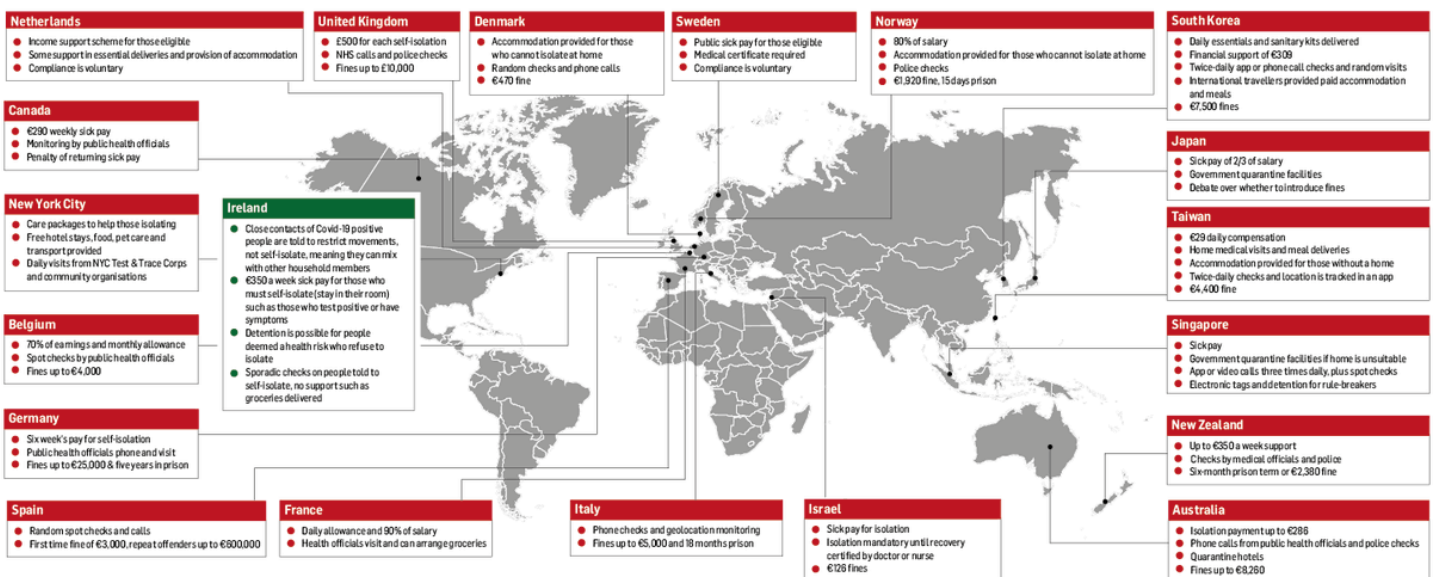
At the outset of the pandemic, @DrMikeRyan called on us to "break the chains of transmission".

We haven't. The chains now number over 100,000,000 people.

Why? A central measure is often overlooked: isolating those exposed to the virus.

Global quarantine measures: how Ireland compares

How long to isolate? 14 days: norm in East Asia, Denmark and Finland • 10 days: European norm • 7 days: France



18%

The percentage of people with Covid-19 symptoms who complied with self-isolation in a 2020 UK study of 32,000 people.

11%

The percentage of people who fully self-isolated after being told they were a contact of someone with Covid-19 in the UK study.

80%

The percentage of people found at home when checked by the NYC Test & Trace Corps.

2

The number of daily app or phone calls to check on people in self-isolation in South Korea. Public health workers also randomly visit.

5 years

The maximum prison sentence in Germany for breaking quarantine rules, along with fines up to €25,000.

€600,000

Maximum fine for repeatedly breaking self-isolation in Spain.

Source: Global Health Governance Programme | Graphic: Paul Scott/IRISH TIMES GRAPHICS

The above graph by @Paul5cott compares policy measures around the world on isolation and quarantine.

A lot of focus has been on reducing the random seeding of new chains of transmission through travel.

That's important - but only one part of containing Covid-19 spread.

It sounds simple: if everyone who currently has the virus right now could be kept separate from other people for about two weeks, infections would drop to zero. Pandemic over.

But individuals cannot achieve it alone. Isolation only works within a system of support and enforcement

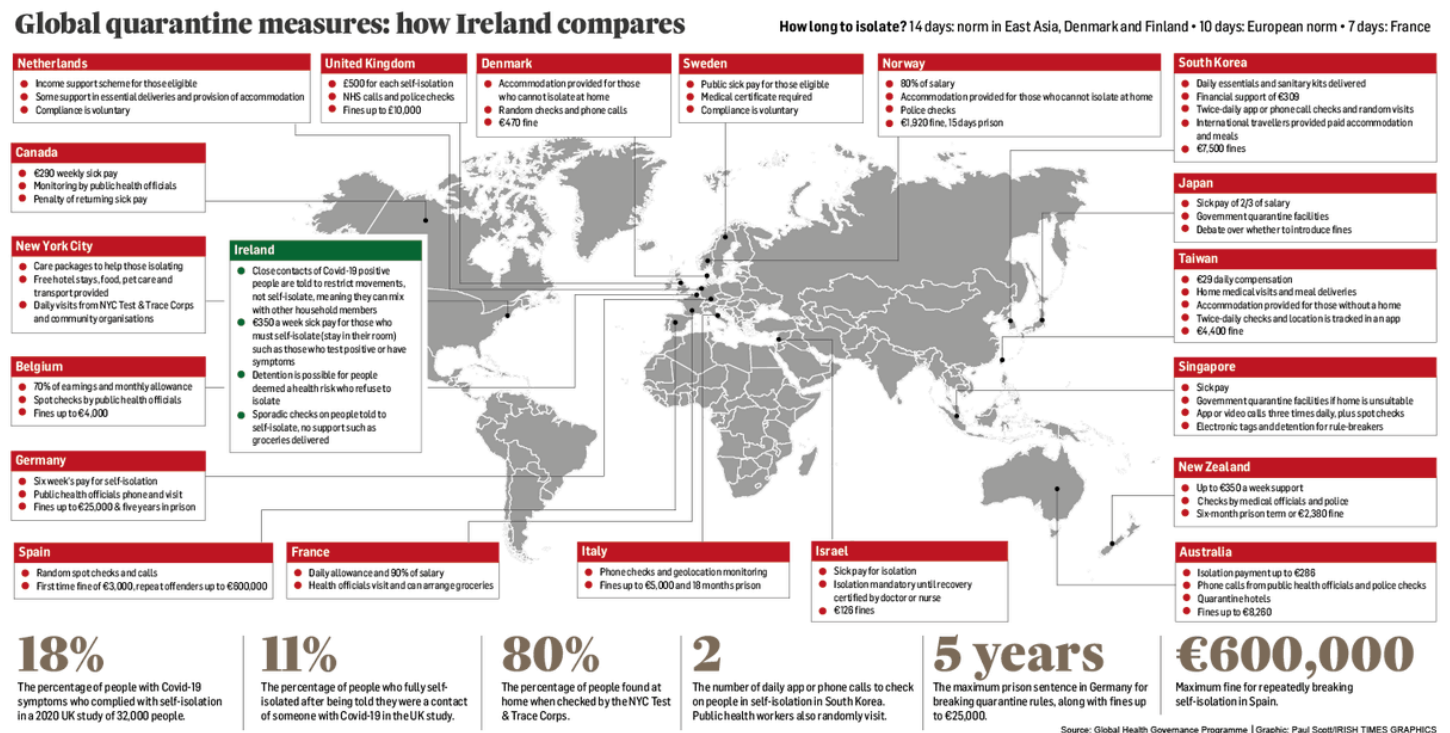
Survey data shows that a very low percentage of people who are just 'told' to self-isolate actually do it.

A study of 32,000 people in the UK over three months last year found only 18% of them actually kept away from others. In

the Netherlands, data indicates it's about 44%.

A large proportion of those who ventured out despite being warned they had been exposed to Covid-19 did so to go to work. Others have to buy groceries, or medicines, or need something for their child. It's not just people being dicks -- they need support.

In order to stop chains of transmission, countries around the world have brought in a range of supports and enforcement for self-quarantine -- illustrated by [@Paul5cott](#) with data collected by [@Patel_Jay](#) of [@GlobalHealthGP](#) Meal deliveries, daily check-ups, sick pay, enforcement.



Isolation, including of travellers, can be done at home. But only if the person is kept totally apart from other household members.

If not, then they need to be provided with somewhere like a hotel room to be alone, as in New York, Norway, Denmark, Singapore, Japan, many others.

(Ireland is strange here. The HSE sanctions mixing with other household members for people who have been exposed to Covid-19 -- a leaky isolation policy).

	Self-isolation (stay in your room)	Restrict your movements (stay at home)
Do this when you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have symptoms of COVID-19 • are waiting for a test appointment or test results • test positive • arrive in Ireland from Brazil or South Africa • are a close contact of someone who arrived in Ireland from Brazil or South Africa and tested positive for COVID-19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are a close contact of someone who has tested positive • live with someone who has COVID-19 symptoms, but you feel well • arrive in Ireland from a country unless you're coming from a green region or Northern Ireland

Here's what happens in Australia:

Anyone exposed to Covid-19 is handed a legally-binding quarantine order with instructions on what they can and can't do. It lays out steep fines for breaking quarantine. The order alone is enough for vast majority to comply, says [@NICU_doc_salone](#)

People quarantining are then smothered with support.

"We call them usually every day, we can arrange groceries. If they need to see a GP for something different we can help them with that, if they are alcoholics we can find them support," [@NICU_doc_salone](#) told me.

Some places like South Korea use geo-tracking apps. In New York, teams of neighbourhood helpers knock door-to-door, arranging anything that the person in quarantine needs. In Taiwan, they'll organise garbage collection for you.

East Asian countries had the advantage in rolling out these systems of past epidemic experience and strong decentralised public health systems.

But examples in the US show how much can be done if we choose to adjust, like New York's hotel quarantines and neighbourhood health hubs

Here's an incredible figure: in the US, 27% of employees do not have paid sick leave.

This study found that the introduction of two weeks' emergency sick pay due to the pandemic saw a drop of 400 Covid-19 cases -- per day, per state! <https://t.co/k9VAscnbyM>

Advantage of keeping cases low is that you can surround those people exposed to the virus with every possible support. As cases grow exponentially, becomes exponentially harder to do.

Then, in lieu of targeted confinement, we end up with confinement of all <https://t.co/zHFAMf1DcT>