



ISAGCOVID19.org

A BETTER WAY FORWARD:  
TOWARDS ELIMINATION OF COVID-19

## Public Webinar: Independent Scientific Advocacy Group

**Time:** 11am - Thursday 31 December 2020  
**Join here:** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_57U66THwSwaB8L4-jfU0iQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_57U66THwSwaB8L4-jfU0iQ)

Ireland is entering potentially its deepest crisis to date in the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is clear that we are facing a national emergency: rapidly rising SARS-CoV-2 infections, and the emergence of a new variant with enhanced transmissibility, mean that immediate action is necessary to mitigate against a surge of infections. Furthermore a detailed and scientifically-informed strategy is required to manage a stable reopening of society in 2021.

We cannot expect to manage the most severe situation to date with our weakest response to date. We ask the government to take decisive action and to commit to a strategic solution incorporating a range of appropriate and proven measures to aggressively suppress SARS-CoV-2 in Ireland in January and February of 2021.

The reasons for this are outlined below, and will be discussed in detail at the press conference on the morning of Thursday December 31st:

- Infections and hospital admissions are rising at an alarming rate in Ireland.
- The new B.1.1.7 SARS-CoV-2 variant is present in Ireland, showing high prevalence in Northern Ireland. We are currently unaware its prevalence in the Republic of Ireland.
- There is credible evidence that the B.1.1.7 variant is 50 – 60 % more transmissible.
- Widespread vaccination in Ireland is likely to begin in late summer 2021, and will take months to complete. This leaves time for multiple *avoidable* lockdowns.

**At this webinar we will outline the I.S.A.G. response to this situation, including:**

- A summary of information of the relevance of the new SARS-CoV-2 variant to Ireland.
- An outlook for the choices we need to make for 2021.
- Current modelling and predictions of SARS-CoV-2 infection rates for the coming month.
- A timeline to aggressively suppress SARS-CoV-2 transmission in Ireland within 6–8 weeks.
- A comprehensive strategy to maintain the suppression of SARS-CoV-2 transmission in the community, while sustainably opening society at Level 1 restrictions in spring 2021.

Ireland as a whole is in a strong position to achieve aggressive suppression because Northern Ireland has initiated a hard 6-week lockdown from 26th December. We have a one-off opportunity to make the island an epidemiological unit, and to take control of our situation in this continuing pandemic.

**Let this lockdown be our last.**

We can suppress the virus and keep Ireland at Level 1 until widespread vaccination is achieved.