

Covid-19

Labour Market and Social Protection

A perspective

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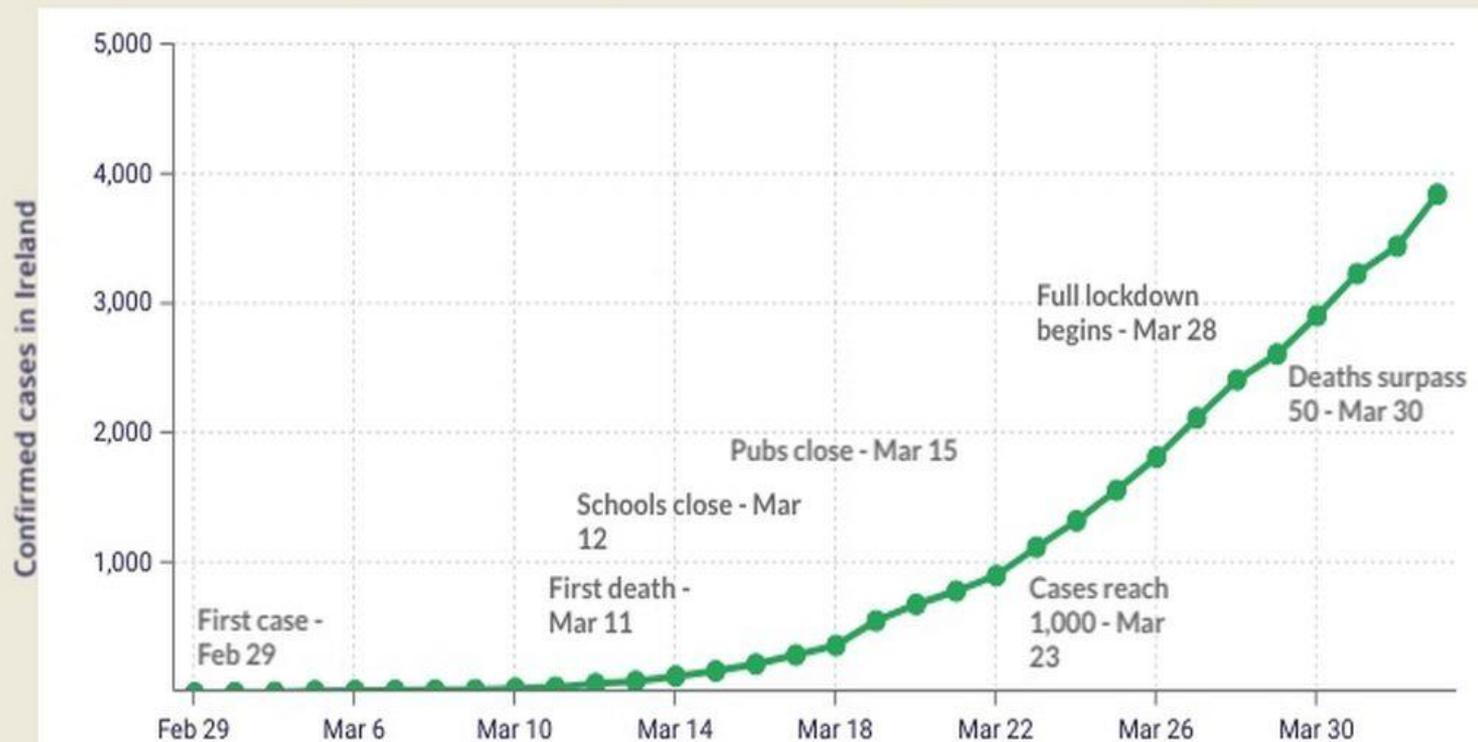
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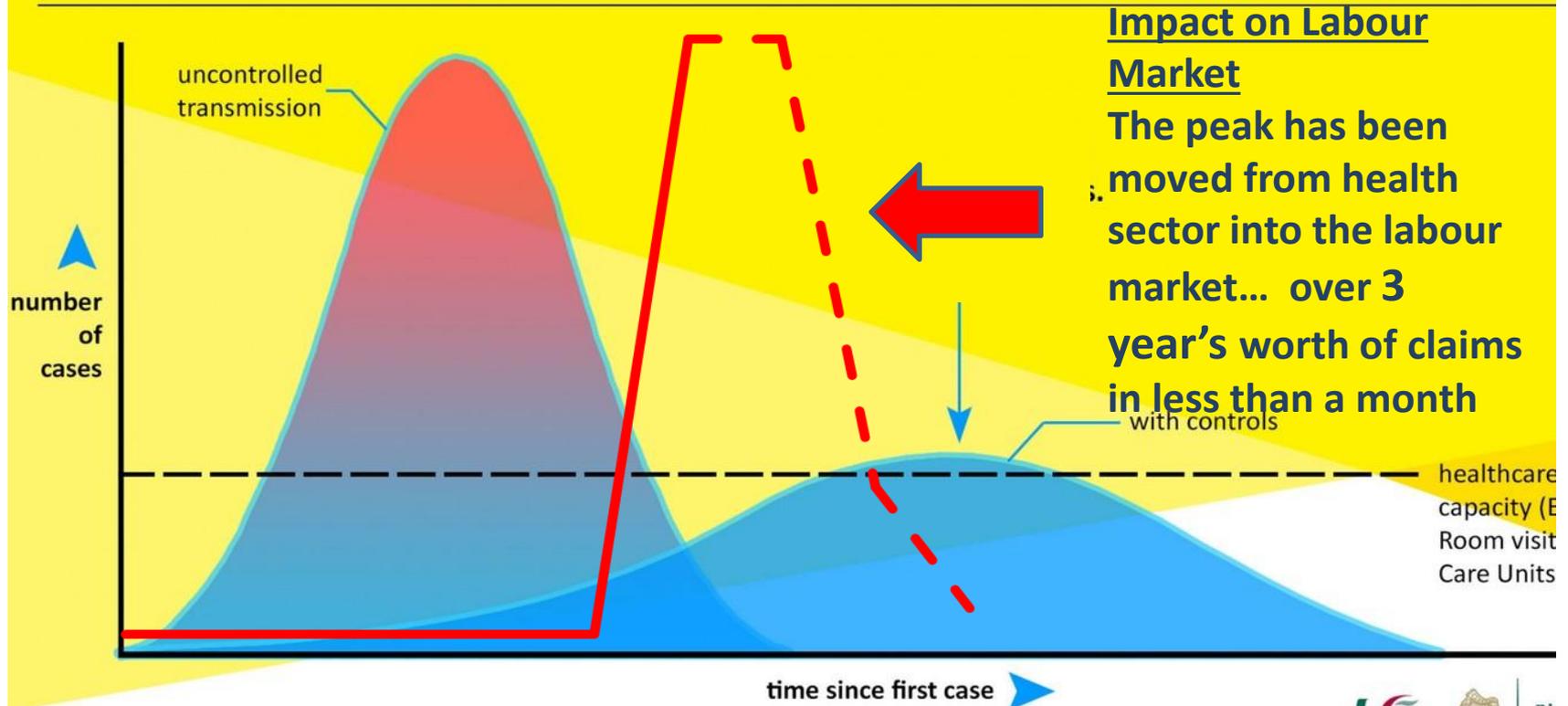
Has it really been just a month?...

Coronavirus cases in Ireland - from first case to April 2

Timeline of events since outbreak began



Lower & Delay the Epidemic Peak



We “squeezed the balloon” to protect the health service in order to protect the lives of our citizens...

Policy priorities: The same...but different

“Normal” focus of income and employment supports

- Get people into payment quickly
- Mitigate poverty while retaining work incentive
- Activate/Support into new employment
- ‘Automatic stabilisation’ (during a recession)
- ‘Control’ and cost

Protect the individual

Protect labour market efficiency

Protect the wider economy

Protect the taxpayer (and other services)



“Covid” focus of income and employment supports

- Get people into payment quickly
- Absorb shock of income loss /maintain social cohesion and public confidence
- Retain link with employer
- Buttress income flow/expenditure
- ‘Control’ and cost

All to protect and enhance the welfare of our citizens

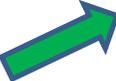
So...What did we do differently?

“Covid” focus of income and employment supports

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Three new temporary flat rate payments to simplify administration and cope with volume – over 800,000 claims processed
New online services built and deployed



Flat rate payment set at two adult household rate
Equivalent to 100% of average take home pay in the sectors most affected



Employer subsidy scheme developed and introduced - 70/85% of pre-Covid salary - over 40,000 employers signed up
Changes to redundancy law to extend period of ‘temporary lay-off’

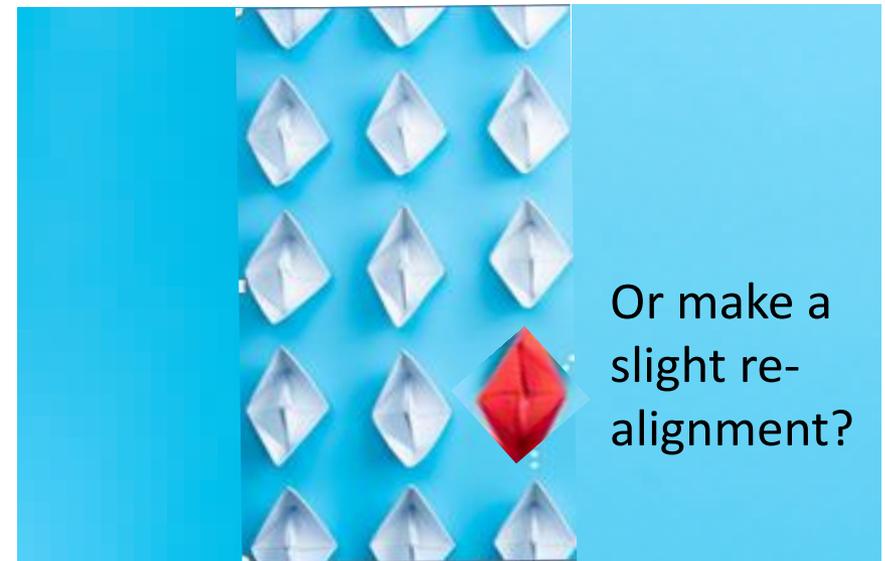


Payment at higher value available to workers including those already on welfare payments (Carers, people with disabilities, lone parents)



‘Ex-post’ vs ‘ex ante’ checks
High confidence based on high level of SAFE registrations

So what happens when it is all over?... Various commentators have identified options



Some questions to ponder...

- What trajectory were we on before the pandemic?
- Why did we make the changes we did?
- Will the circumstances giving rise to the changes persist and, if so, for how long?
- How likely is a recurrence?
- What shape will recovery take? – Will this vary by sector, or geography, or age or some other characteristic?
- Will the ‘new’ ways of working (home working, part-time working etc.) persist and what will that mean for labour market/social protection policy?
- Looking at any options that might be identified?
 - What are the implications for equity? For stability? For growth? For employment?
 - What are the trade-offs against other public policy objectives?
 - What are the operational implications?
 - What will peer States do?
 - What does the public expect? – What will ‘we’ as citizens support or tolerate?