Title: Agenda Item 6 - Communications Update

Author: Deirdre Watters & David Leach
Organisation: Dept of Health & HSE
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Action required:
☐ For noting
☐ For discussion
☐ For decision

Approved for future publication: YES
NPHE – Communications Update
14 Jan 2021

Quantitative Tracker
The nationally representative sample of 1,600 people conducted on behalf of the Department of Health on 11 Jan, available here reveals

• The level of worry remains at 7.0/10, back to the levels seen in March 2020, with worry (45%), anxiety (43%) and hope (38%) being the dominant emotions reported. 88% say they are staying at home.
• The major sources of worry are health system overload (4.2/5.0), health of family and friends (3.9/5.0) and the economy (3.6/5.0).
• 61% of people believe the worst of the pandemic is happening now, 30% believe that it is ahead of us, with 3% believing the worst of the pandemic is behind us.
• 51% believe Government reaction to the pandemic is appropriate and 55% think there should be more restrictions.

Quantitative Tracker – vaccine module
• 83% (67% definite, 16% probable) say they will get the COVID vaccine when it is offered to them, up from 73% in Nov (45% definite, 28% probable)
• 39% say they have concerns around the vaccine – of these 72% are worried about side effects of the vaccine, 58% worried about the long term effects on health.
• GPs are the most trusted source of information on the vaccine for 66% of the population, followed by the HSE (56%) and health experts (50%)

HSE Vaccine Research – 28k respondents
• 80% of Healthcare workers say they would be extremely, very or quite likely to get a COVID vaccine
• 81% of Healthcare workers say they would be extremely, very or quite likely to recommend a COVID-19 vaccine to family or friends
• People are most interested in
  • Who, when where and how to get a vaccine
  • Immunity after the vaccine, when it kicks in and how long it lasts
  • Benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine
  • Long term side effects of the vaccine
  • Safety, evidence of safety
  • Vaccine effectiveness

Qualitative Tracker
Feedback from the qualitative tracker, for the week ending Jan 2021, focus groups among working Mums & Dads and two depth interviews with psychologists reveals:
• Covid drags and is draining. People’s profound tiredness should not be confused with disagreement: by and large, the very high case rate affirms that Government needs to be conservative in approach so we get through this
• People wish to be communicated to in an adult, honest manner. Kite-flying practices deplete respect in leadership. Say things straight, because this means citizens can prepare better. This requires attention in both tone and substance
• The vaccine commands the lion’s share of attention. People’s gut view of the vaccine is often emotionally informed, and this then must be shaped and tempered with diligent information and understanding, via Government
• The pervasive mis-information regarding the vaccine which is swirling in social media is worrying
for citizens. It may well derail our national effort to roll out the vaccine effectively. This should be addressed both by authorities leading out on scientific information, and working with social media companies

- Psychological health is in peril, especially among young adults who have not yet learnt the skills of perspective. Is there a pressing case to be made for psychologically vulnerable to move up the priority queue for vaccination
- A recession is likely coming. Rumbles and worries are rising. There is opportunity now to lead out the narrative as to how the country will navigate this, beyond Covid

**Campaigns underway**

- Living with COVID - protective actions.
- COVID Tracker App
- COVID - Symptoms and Testing
- COVID - self-isolation and restricted movements
- COVID-19 Vaccines
- Young Adults campaign
- Healthy Ireland Keep Well campaign

**HSE Vaccine Communications Update**

- HSE COVID vaccine website has had 240,695 pageviews to 12th Jan
- HSE vaccine website #1 in google search organic results
- Radio and Spotify live since Dec 30th
- Press ad (below) in national and local media
- Facebook & Instagram - total reach over 1.4m
- Strong engagement on twitter – eg #LateLate tweet over 286k impressions and over 129k engagements
- Internal comms: over 10K clicks to staff website. #OurHealthService - sharing staff vaccination stories to provide social proof and showcase rollout to our staff