Title: Agenda Item 6 - Communications Update

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Action required:
☐ For noting
☐ For discussion
☐ For decision

Approved for future publication: YES
Quantitative Tracker
The nationally representative sample of 1,600 people conducted on behalf of the Department of Health by Amarach Research on 26 Jul 2021 published here has revealed:

- The level of worry remains at 5.2/10, the lowest levels seen in the pandemic.
- The majority, 53% now believe the worst of the pandemic is behind us, 16% believe it is happening now and 12% believe it is ahead of us.
- 49% think Ireland is returning to normal at about the right pace, 28% think it is too quick and 23% too slowly.
- People are disengaging from Covid related news.

Vaccine Quantitative Tracker
- According to the Amarach tracker, 74% of the adult population (aged 18+) say they are vaccinated, 17% awaiting dose 2, with 8% not yet vaccinated
- 45% of 18 – 34 years say they are vaccinated, 41% awaiting dose 2, with 14% not yet vaccinated
- GPs are the most trusted source of information on the vaccine for 73% of the population, followed by the HSE (56%), Dept of Health (52%) and Pharmacists (46%)

Social Activity Measure
The Social Activity Measure (ESRI/Department of the Taoiseach), available here for week beginning Jul 16 reveals:

- The percentage of people having close contact with others is increasing, driven by vaccinated people
- 70% of people are not planning to travel in 2021.
- While worry remains the main predictor of compliance with the public health guidelines, perceived coherence of the measures is also becoming significant predictor
- Overall, commitment to following the guidelines remains high, with a mean of over 5 on a scale of 1-7. However, there has been a decrease in how committed people are to following the guidelines around the number of people to meet, particularly among people who have not yet been vaccinated
Qualitative Tracker
Feedback from the qualitative tracker over the three weeks ending 26 July reveals that:

- There is nervousness among most because of Delta Variant. And yet, the wisdom of mature adults is that we need to learn to live with Covid
- The vaccine is a key part of our armoury, but it is not a solution on its own. Hence, the country needs to make progress back towards normalcy
- Older people feel they have regained perhaps 60% of their lives post-vaccination. It is natural to be cautious after such a Red Alert. They await a ‘stand down’ order from Government / CMO – communication which needs to be clear, repeated and irreversible when it comes
- Young Adults need attention urgently. They need access to the vaccine, and they want their sacrifices acknowledged. Many are minded to quit the country as soon as possible
- Overall, clear science-led communication is needed to explain the threat of Delta and breakthrough infections in order to elicit a measured, appropriate response

Campaigns underway
- HSE Campaigns – focus is on calling people to be vaccinated
  - We can do this (updated protective behaviours)
  - #For Us All vaccine campaign
  - Online registration by age group
  - Broad youth and young adults campaign across social, radio, digital audio and media partnerships on radio groups and websites that index highly for u25s

- Sci Comm Collective – group of young science communicators to communicate the virus and the vaccine to their peers via social media