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 13 Dec 2021 published here has revealed:

Amarach Tracker
- The level of worry has seen a slight decline over the past two weeks, now at 5.6, similar to levels seen in April this year
- 44% do not want more restrictions, 41% do
- 51% of the population think government reaction to the current outbreak is appropriate, 35% think it insufficient, 14% think it too extreme
- 42% visited hospitality last week. They report Covid passes checked by sector to be: 84% in cafés, 84% in restaurants, 72% in pubs.

Christmas
- At the end of Nov 60% said they were “happier to have a much quieter Christmas than usual this year” (55% under 35) this has now firmed up to 81% who say they are “planning to have a quiet Christmas this year” (71% under 35).
- 72% have reduced the number of people they plan to meet between now and Christmas because of the recent increase in COVID cases (64% under 35)

Qualitative Data (based on Focus Groups on 14 Dec)
- People are weary, and sometimes feel blamed by Government, even though most are co-operating. They are keen to see enforcement of the rules with immediate consequences where rules are not being followed
- Most all mature adults spontaneously speak of the importance of clear and consistent communication, and the need to avoid several versions of the same story emerging. This is the focus of people: the outcome, not the wrangling between leaders.
- Most of the people continuing to go to office when it’s optional are single. Their choice is about social company and maintaining mental health
- Many employers want to see their staff in the office and encourage it: this is about trust, efficiency, a desire to rebuild team spirit etc. This we need to address directly with employers; citizens would like to see a more assertive stance from government.
- Parents emerge as a key way to influence young adults. They are the boss and often their only link to ‘the real world’.
- Better choices at Christmas are best framed as an adult-to-adult conversation, ‘we need your help to keep this in check and not fall back as we did last year’. A pitch to people’s better nature, not their guilt.

Campaigns currently on air
1. HSE: Thank you – stay at home if you have symptoms
2. HSE: Heads Up - Keep protecting yourself and others from COVID-19
3. HSE: COVID-19 Vaccines and booster invitations
4. DoH: Young Adults – reduce your contacts
5. DoH/GIS: Antigen campaign
6. GIS: Asses your risk – Risk, Venue, Symptoms & People