

## **National Public Health Emergency Team - Coronavirus**

### **Covid -19 Subgroup – Behavioural Change**

#### **Meeting 1**

#### **Note of Meeting and Actions Arising**

**Meeting Date:** Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**Time:** 17.00

**Location:** Video Conference

#### **In attendance:**

##### Department of Health:

Kate O’Flaherty (Chair), Health and Wellbeing

Robert Mooney, Communications

Robert Murphy, Research Services and Policy

Greg Straton, Health and Wellbeing (Secretariat)

ESRI: Pete Lunn

UCD: Liam Delaney

#### **1. Welcome**

The Chairperson welcomed the members to the Subgroup meeting.

#### **2. Conflicts of Interest Declarations**

Members were advised that a Conflict of Interest form would be circulated by the secretariat for members to complete and sign.

#### **3. Terms of Reference, membership and ways of working**

The Chairperson outlined that each Subgroup of the NPHET has produced a Terms of Reference to ensure a consistency of approach. The Terms of Reference of the Subgroup has been drafted and circulated to all members. The members of the subgroup agreed that the Terms of Reference are clear and accepted.

The Subgroup discussed further members. The Chair thanked the members for their suggestions and the following people would be invited to the next meeting: Karl Purcell from SEAI, Molly Byrne from NUIG, and Aileen McGloin from Safefood.

It was raised that the membership of the group should be flexible to enable the recruitment of expertise as required. There are numerous offers of support that could be taken up on an ad-hoc basis. It was agreed that there is an important differentiation of those that may provide an important piece of work to the Subgroup and those that are members of the group itself.

#### **4. NPHET Update – Kate O’Flaherty**

The Chairperson advised that the Subgroup has been established following the publication of the ‘Ireland’s National Action Plan in response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)’. The NPHET is currently scheduled to meet every Tuesday morning, and on an ad-hoc basis in response to any arising issues. The Chairperson will attend the NPHET meetings and report from the subgroup and will in addition bring items for consideration from the NPHET to the Subgroup.

#### **5. Update on Communications / Listening / Research Inputs – Robert Mooney**

There was a general discussion around specific elements that the Subgroup may need to look at, such as hand washing, respiratory hygiene, social distancing, management of infection and self-isolation. Additionally, the need to measure progress to demonstrate that communications and interventions are working.

It was agreed the Robert Mooney would provide a consolidated report to the subgroup on a weekly basis that would incorporate the elements of work of the group and wider inputs, including those outlined below.

- Literature Review –  
Liam Delaney offered to continue to curate the ongoing Literature review for the Subgroup. The base review has been completed and if necessary resources may be made available by the Geary Institute at UCD if further Literature Reviews are required. The group agreed that there are two aspects to the ongoing Lit Review process, firstly keeping an eye on what is being produced globally, and secondly the need to delve into specific issues, such as non-linear disease transmission. The Chair stated that if resources were required to enable research that they could be made available.
- Social Listening –  
Daily reports from MCCP and Analytica are being provided and will be circulated to the group.

MCCP host a weekly online Focus Group and produce a weekly report for Friday mornings. Robert Mooney invited members of the group to feed into the workshop questions and would provide the Subgroup with the Focus Group Guide

- National Representative Online Studies –  
There are two NROs that are currently occurring, the Amárach study which is occurring on a weekly basis and the HSE survey. The Amárach study is run every Monday and the data is available on Tuesday. The reports from these studies will be shared with the Subgroup when they become available.  
Liam Delaney offered to liaise with Amárach to feed into any specific questions that are being asked

- **Web Analytics –**

Some of the website data was shared with the Subgroup. Daily data is available to indicate social media and website interactions. It was agreed that this data was useful to indicate that people are going to the places that they are being sent for information.

There was a general discussion around Physical Infrastructure. Liam Delaney raised physical infrastructure / choice architecture in retail spaces. Robert Murphy agreed to look hand hygiene over the coming weeks in relation to drafting a brief written guide for workplaces. It was agreed to produce specific proposals and materials that make it easy for retailers to incorporate required behavioural change into their operations. The Chair mentioned that this offer will be brought to discussions occurring with this sector

There was another general discussion about the use of Behavioural Science language and how the outputs of the group are communicated.

## **6. ESRI BRU Proposal – Pete Lunn**

The ESRI Behavioural Research Unit (BRU) provided a proposal to the Subgroup on three specific research topics. These included, Comprehension of Behavioural Measures thus Far, Tests of ‘Social Distancing Communication’ and Monitoring Fatigue.

Pete Lunn mentioned the importance of identifying ‘Marginal Behaviours’ within the population that can be measured as an outcome variable for the purposes of these studies.

It was also mentioned that these studies were being conducted on a learning by doing type of approach given the timescales. Therefore, the type of sampling that would be applied at the outset would be small and that after the first few these would expand. It was important not to over recruit at the outset whilst the measures were being tested. It was decided that the weekly MCCP focus groups as well as the weekly surveys could be used to inform the variables or Marginal Behaviours. It was also mentioned that the BRU was also setting up structures to sequence and run a number of studies sequentially.

It was decided to test social distancing with 2 manipulations, efficacy and emotional, over the coming week as a priority given the current focus of communications. It was mentioned that this study would be available at the earliest by the end of next week.

It was decided to hold off the design and commencement on proposal 3, the monitoring of fatigue, until after learnings from the first study could be incorporated into this more long-term piece of work. It was agreed that this is a key concern identified in ‘Ireland’s National Action Plan in response to COVID-19

## **7. AOB**

None

## **8. Dates and Times of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the Subgroup would meet at 11am each Friday via video conference.

Upcoming meetings include:

11am to 12pm - 20<sup>th</sup> of March

11am to 12pm - 27<sup>th</sup> of March

11am to 12pm – 3<sup>rd</sup> of April

## 9. A.O.B

Next meeting: Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 11.00; Video Conferencing

### Summary of Actions Arising:

Action	Description	Responsible
1.	Circulate Conflict of Interest Forms, to be signed by all members	Secretariat, All
2.	Provide Focus Group Guide to Subgroup for Input in advance of the Thursday session	RMooney, All
3.	Liam Delaney to follow up with Amárach	LD
4.	Draft a Brief Written Guide for Workplace on Hand Hygiene	RMurphy
5.	BRU to commence research on social distancing behaviours	PL (BRU)
6.	Identification of marginal behaviours to inform research studies, through the use of focus groups and surveys	All
7.	Share survey instruments (MCCP & HSE) with subgroup	RMooney