National Public Health Emergency Team - Coronavirus

Covid -19 Subgroup – Behavioural Change

Meeting 5

Note of Meeting and Actions Arising

Meeting Date: Thursday 9th of April
Time: 14:00
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

SEAI: Karl Purcell

Safefood: Aileen McGloin

NUIG: Molly Byrne

UL: Orla Muldoon

1. Welcome
Orla Muldoon was welcomed to the meeting as a new member of the Subgroup.

2. Conflict of Interest Declarations
None declared

3. Meeting Note – Meeting 2nd of April 2020
The meeting note of the 2nd of April 2020 was agreed.

4. Update from NPHET – Kate O'Flaherty
- The subgroup members were thanked for their input to the risk register for NPHET and ongoing input into communications such as the hand hygiene poster for distribution to households.
- The Chair updated the group on the WHO-OECD Behavioural Insights community of practice that is being established which had its first virtual meeting on Wednesday the 8th of April.
- The group were updated on an MOU that has been put in place to enable collaboration with Northern Ireland. Members of the group have already been in contact with NI colleagues.

5. Weekly Consolidated Research Report -Rob Mooney

The weekly consolidated report was circulated prior to the meeting and was presented to the group.

- Feedback on the format of the report was sought and the members of the subgroup agreed that it was helpful.
- The importance of considering inclusion of more material on the barriers for people who can't comply with the measurers was discussed, the messaging could become very frustrating for this cohort of the population and may undermine messaging if it doesn't speak to this reality.
- There was also a suggestion to include material on how people understand the 2km restrictions as a social distancing measure.
- The group also discussed the importance of continued consistent messaging to the public across government and the need to continue to appeal to the community type response that has been achieved.

6. ESRI BRU Update – Pete Lunn

The findings of the second BRU study were presented to the group. The study was conducted between Friday the 3rd and Sunday the 5th of April with a sample size of 500 people, taking on average 25 minutes, and focussed on decision aids for self-isolation. The key findings of the study include:

- In relation to the decision to self-isolate, decision making is poor especially for non-core symptoms and the provision of a decision tree with the non-core symptoms separated out helps people make decisions. Decision trees will also increase decision confidence.
- In terms of coping mechanisms, providing a 'day planner' is helpful but this should not be too complicated, this is especially helpful for younger cohorts.
- Providing information on how to self-isolate with infographics improves recall and comprehension, especially for women and groups with lower educational attainment, under 40s perform worse on comprehension.

It was discussed that self-isolation will remain a key behaviour throughout the Covid response and that this study will be helpful to guide communication and support. It was noted that men and younger people continue to be the groups with most difficulties. There was a discussion around the need to address opportunity barriers for self-isolation and to acknowledge in communications that not all people may have the opportunity/ability to self-isolate. There was also an input to consider collective messaging and not individual type messaging when communicating about self-isolation. Karl Purcell mentioned that the NHS had developed a decision tree and would share this with the group. Robert Mooney will test the material identified in the study with the focus groups in the coming week. The need for more intensive interventions, eg a 'training' video or other supports to assist with self-isolation decision making and planning was discussed. There was also a discussion around looking to make this appropriate for different housing situations.

7. Rapid Evidence Reviews

- The Subgroup discussed the collation of the reviews that are underway and the identification of evidence review gaps. The Subgroup discussed the possibility of wider calls for evidence reviews from the academic community and what additional capacity

might be accessed. The Chair asked the subgroup to submit research questions for consideration, especially so that any capacity gaps could be addressed.
- There was a discussion around identifying settings and vulnerable groups that will require higher levels of support, and the design of guidance materials for these.

8. Mental Health and Wellbeing
- The chair updated the group on the planned launched of a mental health and wellbeing campaign for the coming week.
- Liam Delaney pointed out that there is a lack of evidence around cumulative mental strain and the impact of multiple mental stressors, and that NUI Maynooth have ethics approval for a study on this and that he would follow up on this.
- Orla Muldoon mentioned an Australian tool that enabled people to connect through online scheduling.
- Karl Purcell requested that the Subgroup gain access to data around the increase uptake of mental health support lines and web traffic.

9. Behavioural Insights for Next Phase – Kate O'Flaherty
The Chair agree to share the thinking on plans for the next phase with the Subgroup when it is available to enable input.   The potential contribution of the Subgroup to next phase was discussed, in terms of lending expertise and insights to communications, measuring effectiveness and compliance and generating ideas on how to support the wider behaviours needed in subsequent phases.

10. A.O.B
- Karl Purcell raised that the guidance for employers and employees in terms of self-isolation could be looked at by the group, especially on how to determine close and casual contacts.

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Next meeting:

2pm – Thursday 16th of April 2020

Summary of Actions Arising:

9th of April 2020

Description	Responsible
Share digital NHS Decision Tree with the group	KP
Testing of Self Isolation material with focus groups	RMooney
Submit studies and research questions for collation to Secretariat	All
Share online tool for maintaining connections	OM
Outline of next phase from NPHET for consideration	KOF