

**National Public Health Emergency Team - Coronavirus**

**Covid -19 Subgroup – Behavioural Change**

**Meeting 13**

**Note of Meeting**

**Meeting Date:** Friday 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2020

**Time:** 10:30

**Location:** Video Conference

**In attendance:**

Department of Health:

Kate O’Flaherty (Chair), Health and Wellbeing

Robert Mooney, Communications

Greg Straton, Health and Wellbeing (Secretariat)

Robert Murphy, Research Services and Policy

ESRI: Pete Lunn

NUIG: Molly Byrne

Safefood: Aileen McGloin

SEAI: Karl Purcell

UCD: Liam Delaney

UL: Orla Muldoon

**1. Welcome**

The Chairperson welcomed the members to the Subgroup meeting.

**2. Conflict of Interest Declarations**

None declared

**3. Meeting Note – Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2020**

The meeting note of the 21<sup>st</sup> of May was approved; the meeting note of the meeting from the 29<sup>th</sup> of May will be re-circulated to the Subgroup for review.

#### **4. Update from NPHEt – Kate O’Flaherty**

The focus of NPHEt over the past week was the review of the lifting of the restrictions for phase 2 and its advice to Government. The insights from the Subgroup on risk perception, micro-communities and the readiness of businesses were input into the NPHEt deliberations. A Government announcement is expected today.

#### **5. Insights from the Week -Rob Mooney**

A report was circulated to the Subgroup prior to the meeting for consideration. The Quantitative results from the week included:

- Still strong self-reported adherence to measures
- Significant improvement in mood and lower levels of worry
- High level of people reporting that they feel the worst is now behind us, but 59% expect a second wave
- Majority of respondents report that the government response is appropriate with males more likely to want a faster easing of restrictions
- There is a disengagement with Covid related news

Qualitative Results, included:

- Increasing levels of mistrust amongst younger cohorts
- People are applying mitigation measures less strictly than previously and find it challenging to apply the right behaviour in the right setting

There was a discussion around the need to ensure that choice architecture is in place to enable people to apply the appropriate behaviours, and that further insights into the factors influencing choices will be useful for many behaviours, for example wearing of face coverings. There was also a discussion on a potential disjunction between public sentiment on easing of restrictions from the research, and where the recent public discourse is going, particularly around discourse on risks and trade-offs, and a focus on the longer-term.

#### **6. Updates on Ongoing Work**

##### **(a) BRU Update**

A study to test the Covid tracing App is currently in the field and results are expected for the meeting next week. The proposed study on risk perceptions was discussed, and its importance in the current context of moving from a rules-based approach to one where people are more empowered to use their judgement noted. The study design will be circulated to the group for feedback. The possibility of including a list experiment to test compliance with current key guidance in the next study was also discussed. The group also discussed what other objective metrics could be available in coming phases to monitor compliance, including for example data on movement, hand sanitiser use.

##### **(b) Covid App**

Discussed in the item above.

##### **(c) DBEI**

The survey results have been formally presented to a group of officials in DBEI. The study findings were welcomed, and feedback included that the findings mirrored other data collected through business helplines. DBEI will consider how to utilise the study findings and will update on any further relevant developments.

## **7. Behavioural Issues for Future Phases of Roadmap**

The Subgroup discussed various issues for consideration in future phases, these included the behavioural impact of any mandatory measures, future adherence to the re-introduction of restrictions in the event of a resurgence of Covid, changes in risk perceptions and behavioural/message fatigue. The importance of ongoing refinement of communications approaches was highlighted, and the idea of using a ‘traffic light’ system to indicate overall risk considered. Potential challenges were discussed in getting some population cohorts, such as young people who may have ongoing adverse impact from Covid or perceive risk to their own cohort as lower than others, to comply with re-introduction of stringent measures.

## **8. Stocktake/review exercise**

This exercise was undertaken as part of the review of structures and operation of NPHET to inform any changes that may be required to ensure a sustainable and robust framework is in place to support NPHET’s response as it moves into the next phase of the disease control strategy. Overall the group had positive feedback on the arrangements and work undertaken to date, as well as acknowledging the feedback from international colleagues that the process in Ireland has been comparably successful and useful to the national response. The detailed feedback from the group will be fed into the overall discussion at NPHET.

## **9. A.O.B**

None raised

## **10. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Next meeting: 10:30 Friday the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2020