

Meeting of Pandemic Ethics Advisory Group Minutes

- **Attendees (via Microsoft Teams):**
 - Dr Siobhán O’Sullivan (Chair);
 - Dr Barry Lyons;
 - Dr Joan McCarthy;
 - Dr Andrea Mulligan BL;
 - Dr Louise Campbell;
 - Prof. David Smith;
 - Dr Simon Mills SC;
- **Apologies:**
 - Mr Mervyn Taylor.
 - Mr Stephen McMahon;
- **Also in Attendance:**
 - Audrey Ní Chaoidealbháin (secretariat).

1. Minutes from previous meetings

- The minutes from 29th May were agreed.

2. Update from NPHE

- The Chair informed members that NPHE are working to consolidate the roadmap for the easing of restrictions and focussing on monitoring numbers, nationally and internationally.
- She advised that NPHE is expected to review its role after July 20.
- The Chair noted that NPHE is establishing a Vaccine Strategy Group.

3. Discussion of draft Procedural Values paper

- The Chair opened the discussion by reminding the group of the impetus behind the paper. A number of clinicians had sought more detail on decision making following the publication of the Ethical Framework. The paper has a broader focus than clinical decision making and seeks to provide clarity to policy makers too.
- The group agreed that the paper should highlight that it is discussing decisions that are taken at discrete moments in time. Decision making during a pandemic becomes even more challenging because of time and resource pressures.
- It was suggested that the link between the principles and the procedural values could be strengthened. It was noted that the principles are public health principles which differ from classic medical ethics principles which the target audience may be more familiar with.
- There was a consensus that the graphic describing questions to be posed as part of the decision making process would be very useful to decision makers.
- It was suggested that a footnote be added to clarify the difference between ethical and legal definitions of reasonableness.
- The term “appeals process” was questioned as it suggested a more legalistic process than might be envisaged, for example, an opportunity to question or challenge a decision.

- There was a discussion on whether or not it would be useful to include case studies to demonstrate how the procedural values should be applied as part of a specific decision making process. While it was considered that there could be value in this approach, it was suggested that the selection of a particular case study could refocus attention to the particulars of the case study rather than how the procedural values should be applied. It was agreed that case studies would detract from the focus and brevity of the paper.
- It was agreed that the group would forward their suggested amendments and the secretariat would recirculate the paper, at which stage a decision would be made regarding the inclusion of case studies.

4. AOB

- The Chair proposed a final paper outlining the work of the group and invited the group to identify and share the lessons learned from PEAG.
- The Chair advised the group of an FOI received and dealt with by the secretariat.