

**National Public Health Emergency Team - Coronavirus**

**Covid -19 Subgroup – Behavioural Change**

**Meeting 14**

**Note of Meeting**

**Meeting Date:** Friday 12<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

Guest Presentation: Hannah Julianne (ESRI)

**1. Welcome**

The Chairperson welcomed the members to the Subgroup meeting and noted that Hannah Julianne of the ESRI would join the meeting to present findings for item 6 (a)

**2. Conflict of Interest Declarations**

None declared

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

The meeting note of the 29<sup>th</sup> of May and the meeting note of the meeting from the 5<sup>th</sup> of June will be re-circulated to the Subgroup for review.

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

The Chair updated the Subgroup on the work of NPHET over the last week. NPHET have considered face coverings over the last week, in addition the process to examine the re-phasing of the easing of restrictions.

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

A presentation prepared by MCCP on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June to analyse qualitative tracking over the lifestage of the Covid crisis was shared prior to the meeting and discussed. The need to create a repository of data gathered together for future and current research with the various qualitative and quantitative trackers was discussed, additionally the need to have ready access to the microdata from the CSO was discussed. The Chair agreed to follow up on the latter point to see what progress might be underway with CSO.

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

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

Data collection for the BRU study to test the Covid tracing App was completed by the BRU and a presentation with preliminary results was shared during the meeting. The study had an overall sample size of 1,276 respondents, however a significant amount, 415, did not download the App and 798 completed the follow-up phase of the survey. The sample can be considered representative although it is weighted toward a younger cohort. Before downloading the trial app, most participants indicated that they would be likely to download the real app. It was found that men and lower socio-economic cohorts were less likely to indicate they would download the real App. These gender/age effects appear to be explained by levels of anxiety & trust of Irish authorities, but effect of social grade persists. Many participants (1 in 5) mentioned privacy concerns unprompted, when asked for the reason for their rating. This was especially true of those who were less likely to download.

Two messages were tested, the framing of reasons for the App and the provision on assurance around privacy. The goal-framing manipulation (safe progress frame versus collective action frame) applied to the “call to action” material participants were shown to have no effect on any outcome variables, other than a potential marginal effect on a question about how important they think it is everyone downloads the app. However, there was a positive effect by providing an assurance around privacy, such as greater trust, lower level of privacy concern, increased consent, and increased perceived effectiveness of the App. The study also showed a general lack of understanding around how the App itself works, what personal data it collected, and many thought the App collected GPS data even though it was explicitly explained that it did not. In relation to the follow-up survey, the majority of users checked the App more than twice a day and the overall impression was positive. It was noted that the download process for this study differed to that for the real App and that the process to download the launch version will be simpler. The study findings and subgroup discussion will be fed into the ongoing work of the App development group and evolving communications strategy for the App.

The next study to be conducted by the BRU on risk perception will be going live next week and any further input from the group into the study design was welcomed. The

study aims to better understand how people are judging the risk of contracting Covid-19 in different contexts, and what factors are influencing judgements of risk. A ‘list experiment’ will be included with the aim of checking whether social desirability is inflating self-reporting of key behaviours.

(b) Ad Hoc updates:

None discussed

## **7. Youth Wellbeing**

The Chair notified the Subgroup of an online qualitative consultation process by the Department of Children and Young Adults that is due to proceed, in partnership with the youth sector. The methodology will be open ended with the objective of eliciting the voice of younger people. Members of the Subgroup with experience in working with younger cohorts expressed their availability to advise on the process, if required, and the group would be interested in the consultation’s outputs.

## **8. Future/Emerging Issues**

The Subgroup discussed potential emerging issues for consideration especially given that the period post phase 4 of the easing of restrictions does not represent a return to normality and the prospect of a second wave of infections. The Subgroup discussed the need for more work to examine the impacts of restrictions on high risk groups.

There was also a discussion on the present public discourse which is in discordance with public perception and how this may impact on the long-term credibility of public health advice and public adherence to any future measures in the event of a second wave. The importance of the necessary ‘choice architecture’ being in place to enable people to apply the appropriate behaviours was re-iterated.

The Subgroup discussed the need to be prepared for a second wave and to have a planned approach to this, this may however depend on the approach that the NPHET and ECDC are considering, and what different strategies might be needed for any resurgence in the virus. It was mentioned that the issue of preparing for a second wave could be mentioned at the next OECD International COVID-19 Behavioural Insights group and how best to share information. This may include issues around ‘message fatigue’ as people are beginning to disengage from Covid related news.

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

None raised

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

Next meeting: Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2020 at 10:30am