

Update from Subgroup on Behavioural Change for NPHE meeting 14/4/2020

- The Subgroup is meeting weekly and last met on Thursday 9th April.
- Professor Orla Muldoon, Head of Psychology Department in University of Limerick has joined the Subgroup, bringing an expertise in social psychology and perspective around collective/group identities and behaviours.
- The Subgroup continues to analyse research and literature on a range of relevant topics, including key public health behaviours, mental wellbeing and sustaining behaviour change, and are giving ongoing advice to the Communications work.
- A 'nudge' communications tool around **handwashing at home** has been developed arising from the Subgroup's research and advice, and is being executed by the Communications group for nationwide dissemination.
- A rapid online behavioural study by the ESRI on **symptom identification and self-isolation**, found that a significant number of people appear to struggle with confidently identifying correct symptoms and recalling self-isolation advice. The study also found that a planning tool may be helpful in addition to further communications advice. The Subgroup have advised that additional more intensive interventions should be considered, as well as consideration given to supporting people with more limited means or ability, e.g. because of living conditions or facing other 'structural' barriers or inequalities, to comply with self-isolation requirements.
- Further mental wellbeing studies are under consideration by the Subgroup, and liaison is underway with DBEI to explore what future support may be required for workplaces and businesses to ensure the physical environment can facilitate key public health behaviours. The Subgroup has also begun consideration of how it can support the planning for future phases of the pandemic.
- In line with the MoU with Northern Ireland, a link has been made with a similar group being established in the North and opportunities for collaboration are being explored.
- Members of the Subgroup also participated in a webinar organised by WHO and OECD to share behavioural insights work underway around various Covid-19 challenges and will continue to engage with this new international network.
- The Subgroup agreed that working papers and other outputs will be published on the relevant gov.ie page <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/3008f6-the-national-public-health-emergency-team-nphet-covid-19-subgroup-be/>