COVID-19 Communications and Behavioural Group
Meeting 10

Date: 22/1/2021

Time: 14.00

Venue: Video Conference

Attendance: Deirdre Watters (DOH), Deirdre Robertson (ESRI), Liam Delaney (UCD), Marie Boran (DCU), Karl Purcell (SEAI), Rachel Wright (HSE), Rosaleen Harlin (DOH), Angela McGloinn (UL), Barbara Gormley (DCU), Gerard O'Neill (Amárach Research), Pete Lunn (ESRI), Molly Byrne (NUIG), Orla Muldoon (UL), Robert Murphy (DOH), Fiona Gilligan (DOH), Aileen McGloin (SafeFood).

Agenda:
- NPHET request for paper on sustaining compliance & next steps
- AOB

Agenda Item 1

- Chair opens with discussion of Amarach research at the previous day's NPHET, pandemic fatigue, while data going in right direction there is a worry that potential improvements are slowing or plateauing, level of diseases ten times what it is at the start of December, urgent need to get this level of infection down further and further

- Request around more granular data in terms of outbreaks, number of close contacts outside of averages, locations of spread, age breakdown of cases and more detail penetration of infection throughout population

- Average contact down to 2.1 - but how sustainable is this?

- Younger cohorts. Where are this age group getting infected more? Is it their lifestyle? Must acknowledge it may be due to their work and occupations, and not target unfairly, as we have avoided doing successfully in communications in the past

- Contacts by age group?

- How do we communicate risk? Hazard ratios?

- Request for clarity on what is the ask?

- Is it now 'stay at home' or is it 'reduce your contacts'?

- Stay at home issue is problematic: Not only young adults, but also rural issues - the 5km, and also those at home with children

- Losing hope means a loss of a sense of responsibility, or even an interest in the vaccine - needs to be a message of hope, focus on what can and will be done, we will get there, there is a more positive narrative here that can be substantiated, perhaps this should be focused on more

- The importance of positive reinforcements - a thank you, and look at what we have demonstrably achieved, ram home a positive goal, achieved through collective action

- Can we offer anything to those truly fed up with communications, are they the target? We can't reverse the restrictions and reinstate childcare and jobs, so is that who we're talking to?

- Relative risks - young people should be alerted to risk of meeting with peers versus risk of meeting older relatives or loved ones

- Are specific measures helpful, or do they provide a hard limit that some people 'aim' for? Or are hard and specific limits necessary and beneficial in terms of clarity?

- Suggestion of a document the group would sign off on in terms of a recommittment to principles, reinforcement and norms

- Chair shows youth related comms being created with Unthink over Christmas and currently, and looking at this going forward

- HSE looking at adding vaccine calculator and bot to answer vaccine queries on website - anxiety around date of vaccination

- Insight from HSE focus groups around perception of choice or preference between available portfolio of vaccines

- Update on projects and studies ongoing with ESRI

- Potential linkage between modelling done by Prof Nolan, the data available on the COVID data hub, and some other data being generated by groups, in terms of behavioural data

Agenda Item 2:
No AOB