

Minutes
Research Subgroup of Expert Advisory Group
 27 March 2020, 4pm (by telecall)

Present: Colm Bergin (Co-Chair), Cliona O’Farrelly (Co-Chair), Teresa Maguire, Mark Ferguson, Mairead O’Driscoll
 (Apologies - Siobhán O’Sullivan)

| ITEM | Discussion | ACTIONS |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Minutes from previous meeting were agreed without edit | |
| 2 | TM updated the group on meeting held the previous day in Dept of the Taoiseach, the agreement to soft-launch the HRB and SFI calls and the plans to convene a standing group to ensure and oversee a whole-of Government approach to research for COVID-19. | TM/SOS to update on future developments |
| 3 | <p>Membership of the subgroup was discussed.</p> <p>CB noted that a letter had been sent to the Chair of the EAG by the VP Research of the Universities seeking representation on the subgroup and he would update at the next meeting after talking with the Chair of the EAG.</p> <p>TM suggested that Dr Ana Terres, Head of Research & Evidence in the HSE, would be a valuable addition to this group, and this was agreed by the group.</p> | <p>Update to be provided by CB at next meeting</p> <p>TM to forward contact details to CB in order that he can formally invite AT to join the group</p> |
| 4 | Terms of Reference : CB noted that the ToR had been tabled at and accepted by the EAG earlier that afternoon | |
| 5 | TM gave an update on work underway to deliver a dedicated National Research Ethics Committee to provide an expedited review mechanism for all COVID-19-related research. | |
| 6 | <p>Prioritisation and work-streams</p> <p>The group had a discussion about the clinical trials work-stream- while other discussions on potential trials will arise, there was consensus that Ireland should make a formal request to the WHO for Ireland to join the SOLIDARITY TRIAL as a matter of urgency. It was also agreed that the key individuals/actors that are needed to work with in order to support planning and downstream operationalization is: HPRA (Elaine Breslin), HRB-CRCI (Fionnuala Keane) and HSE Medicines Management. The group may need to engage with others when assessing other trials, but this is the key group for now. The Department (as formal line with WHO) should engage with others in this work-stream to move this forward as early as possible next week.</p> <p>The group discussed the importance and benefits of serology studies – CB noted that this item is being discussed at the EAG (including the discussion on use of convalescent plasma). The group proposes to establish a work-stream, similar to clinical trials, to put shape on a paper for the NPHE and to advance work in this area. It was noted that Ireland has procured 20,000 point-of-care kits in anticipation of a larger order. This is in a context where there is global uncertainty as to whether commercially available kits will work or not. Public Health England are</p> | <p>CB to contact Chair of EAG and NPHE to raise this issue. A short paper with this strong recommendation should be tabled at the next NPHE meeting for approval</p> <p>CB to contact others to join work-stream</p> <p>MF to update if feedback received from</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | <p>validating kits so contact will be made to see if they can share this information (and any information they might have on kits they already explored/validated).</p> <p>Researchers from TCD and UCD were highlighted as potential members of this work-stream.</p> <p>TM noted that it is important to ensure that this team included membership from the service side as this subgroup needs to ensure a national coordinated and aligned approach.</p> <p>It was noted that work in this area is necessary for testing in the immediate term but it is also important to consider the distinct but related opportunities for researching the immune response.</p> <p>MF noted that SFI would be interested in supporting initiatives in this areas</p> <p>Areas flagged for discussion at the next meeting/s were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure issues- biobanks and data sharing • Resources required to action Research Subgroup projects • Plans to engage with NPHE and others to collate a summary of priority areas | <p>PHE</p> <p>CF and others to circulate names of possible work-stream members for discussion at next meeting</p> |
| 7 | <p>CB noted the importance of a communication to research stakeholders about the work of this subgroup and other NPHE research-related initiatives</p> | <p>For further discussion- especially in light of the planned communication by Dept Taoiseach</p> |

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 31 March 2020 at 4pm (Telecall)