

## Minutes of the Covid-19 Communications and Behavioural Advisory Group

### Meeting 2

**Meeting Date:** Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2020

**Time:** 10:00

**Location:** Video Conference

#### **Attendance:**

Deirdre Watters (Chair) (DOH)

Molly Byrne (NUI Galway)

Orla Muldoon (UL)

Robert Murphy (DOH)

Brian McIntyre (Orchard)

Gerard O'Neill (Amárach)

Lyndsey Drea (DOH)

Sinéad O'Donnell (DOH)

Sheila Caulfield (DOH)

Fiona Gilligan (DOH)

Rosaleen Harlin (DOH)

Rachel Wright (HSE)

Barbara Gormley (DCU)

Marie Boran (DCU)

Elaine Scanlon (Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science)

Aileen McGloin (Safefood)

Deirdre Robertson (ESRI)

Karl Purcell (SEAI)

#### **Agenda:**

1. October Findings - enhancing compliance among young adults
2. The implementation of fines and penalties for breaking COVID-19 public health restrictions - link to articles [here](#) and [here](#)

### 3. AOB

**Welcome:** The chair welcomed all those attending the meeting and noted there were no apologies.

#### **Agenda Item 1:**

The chair presented the October findings:

- High level of compliance among young adults (on some measures), but their patience for more restrictions is being tested
- Young adults are already very vulnerable emotionally
- It isn't just young adults whose tolerance for continued restrictions will be tested at Level 5
- Simplify the guidelines in targeted communication
- Two channels to be used: authorities & peers
- Group consensus that a laddered approach to engagement aimed at Young Adults would be successful
- End Game: Young Adults become a connected, valued, supported and trusted part of the national effort to move through Covid

#### **Agenda Item 2:**

- An international study, [iCARE](#), surveyed COVID-19 related attitudes, concerns and behaviours since the outset of the pandemic among 65,000 people living in 140 countries, including Ireland. When asked which measures convince them to adhere to public health restrictions, people consistently say that threats of fines and arrest are the least persuasive.
- Penalties may have unintended consequences of damaging social cohesion and collective willingness to engage with the restrictions.
- Current compliance with mask-wearing is 96%+ according to the latest Amarach tracker survey. Introducing fines for behaviours with high compliance might backfire by 1) over penalising those who unintentionally break the rule (e.g. forgetting your mask) and 2) by further agitating the very small minority who aren't complying.

#### **AOB:**

Future potential research questions and the input process for the group

- Hackathons have been used successfully by group members in the past
- SMS supports, or linking people with a relevant peer who is already doing the behaviour they want to do can increase participation
- SafeFood START campaign - reframes our restriction as increased family time, an opportunity to exercise and eat better
- Next meeting will review compliance with self-isolating and restricting movement