

NHS Test and Trace Public Advisory Group

Independent Advisory Group Summary Note for 31st March 2021 Meeting

Attendees: Independent Advisory Group (IAG)	
Michael Burgess, (Chair) Professor Biomedical Ethics, University of British Columbia	Paul Plant, Deputy Director, Public Health England (London region)
Hetan Shah, Chief Executive, The British Academy	Renate Samson - Principal Policy Advisor at Which?
Abigail Gallop - Principal Policy Adviser at Local Government Association	Mehrunisha Suleman - Senior Research Fellow at Health Foundation
Mahlet (Milly) Zimeta - Head of Public Policy at the Open Data Institute	

Attendees: Project team	
Amy Darlington, Director, ICHP	Mark Kewley, Director, ICHP
Abeer Itrakjy, Associate Director, ICHP	Michelle Mackie, Research Director, Ipsos MORI
Suzannah Lansdell, Associate, Involve	

- Apologies: Simon Burall, Senior Associate, Involve

Attendees: Test and Trace (T&T) team	
Axel Heitmueller, Director of Strategy and Policy, NHS Test and Trace	Jason Caplin, Products Director, NHS Test and Trace
Onyinyechi JomboOfo – Project Manager, NHS Test and Trace	Aleksandra Volkova, NHS Test and Trace

No.	Action	Owner	Deadline
1	Share slides that were presented at meeting and notes from the meeting.	Abeer Itrakjy	06.04.2021
2.	Share agenda and discussion outline which will form basis of next meeting.	Abeer Itrakjy	06.04.2021
3.	Review discussion outline ahead of next meeting.	Advisory Group members	07.04.2021
4.	Review Terms of Reference for sign off at next meeting.	All	07.04.2021

Introductions

- The members of the group introduced themselves.

Introduction to the Public Advisory Group (PAG) project

- The background and context to the PAG was introduced. Throughout the Covid response, the government has been grappling with difficult policy decisions that impact everyone in the country. There are still many policy decisions to be made as we enter the next phase of the covid response, many of these decisions are likely to involve the use of data.
- These policy challenges don't have clear answers and in order to inform these decisions, ministers and officials at T&T felt it important to engage the public in a meaningful way and to use their insights to inform the decision making.

Questions and comments

- It was queried whether this project was related to the NHS/Foxglove lawsuit and clarified that this is unrelated.
- A question was raised about potential bias within the sampling of the public advisory group in relation to digital exclusion. It was clarified that those who want to participate and can't because they don't have access to the relevant equipment or wifi, will be provided with the relevant kit to ensure this isn't a barrier to inclusion.

Introduction to the dialogue and deliberation process and the role of the IAG

- The dialogue and deliberation process, the sampling and the role of the IAG was explained. See the attached slides for further information.
- A sortition approach to recruitment to the PAG has been taken which has involved 20,000 invitations being sent to addresses randomly selected from the Royal Mail postcode database. From those who respond expressing an interest to participate, 100 participants will be selected to a set of agreed quotas representative of the general population. Forty per cent of the sample would be weighted to include additional representation from groups who may be under-represented or disproportionately impacted by Covid-19 or the interventions to manage it.
- The role of the IAG is to provide check and challenge to the process to ensure it is impactful and authentic. As well as participating in the virtual meetings, there is an expectation to review materials in between meetings, particularly those that will be presented to the public.

Questions and comments

- A question was raised about the long-term role of T&T and the longevity of the insights that come out of the PAG. It was confirmed that the primary aim is for the insights to inform policy decisions related to Covid through to Autumn/Winter but the hope is that some principles that come out of the PAG will apply to longer-term policy decisions too.
- A comment was raised around the risk that uncomfortable decisions may need to be made based on the insights from the PAG and queried the level of ministerial buy in for this. Ministerial buy in and sign off for the PAG was confirmed.
- A query was raised around whether the PAG will focus solely on national issues or local/whole system issues too. It was clarified that the focus is on the dilemmas, some of which may have a national solution and some a local solution.

- A concern was raised around the sampling of participants specifically as the sample has been selected before the topics to be deliberated have been confirmed. Discussions have taken place between the supplier and Test and Trace to understand which groups are particularly important to focus on in relation to the policy areas and there are still some decisions to be made on the participants to be selected. It was agreed to take this topic offline, and a one pager will be circulated explaining the sampling process in detail.
- It was raised that there is a risk of damaging trust if the insights generated aren't used to inform future policy decisions. It was confirmed that these risks have been highlighted to ministers and the T&T Board.

Terms of Reference

- The Chair asked if the group had any urgent points to raise on the Terms of Reference and asked the group to review these for sign off at the next meeting.

Next steps

- The next meeting will focus on reviewing the outline for workshops in the dialogue phase.
- Before the next meeting, the group will receive a copy of the slides presented today, a summary note of today's meeting, the agenda for the next meeting on 7th April and the outline for the dialogue phase which will be discussed at the next meeting.