

**EMNRN Meeting 29th October 2020**

**10am – 12:00pm**

**AGENDA**

**Chairperson: Danny Boyle (BEMIS /EMNRN)**

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| Public Health Scotland and Scottish Government Participants | |
| Avril McKenzie | **Senior Health Improvement Officer (PHS)** |
| Elizabeth Oldcorn | **Health Improvement Manager (PHS)** |
| Carolyn Armstrong | **Scottish Government - Income Support Team Leader** |
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| Item | Time |
| Zoom meeting open. Participants sign in with music theme as we await attendees and opening | **9:50 – 10:00** |
| Welcome Rami Ousta / Danny Boyle  Setting the scene and the St. Andrew’s Day Campaign | **10:00 – 10:10** |
| Updates from Thematic subgroup meetings – Group Chairpersons | **10:10 – 10:30**   1. Mental Health – Fiona Crombie 2. Data, Health and Social Outcomes – Jenni Keenan 3. BME frontline workers and Economic Recovery – Charmaine Blaize 4. Education and YP – Vicky Wan 5. Collaboration – Nina Munday |
| Elizabeth Oldcorn and Avril McKenzie – Public Health Scotland  *Improving the accessibility and acceptability of the Test and Protect*  *system for people from minority ethnic communities* | **10:30 – 11:15** |
| Carolyn Scott – Scottish Government  *NRPF and accessing self-isolation payment* | **11:15 – 11:45** |
| Summary and Next Steps | **11:45 – 12:00** |

**Meeting Note**

**Attendees:**

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| Name | Organisation |
| Rami Ousta | **BEMIS** |
| Tanveer Parnez | **BEMIS** |
| Danny Boyle | **BEMIS** |
| Elizabeth Oldcorn | **Public Health Scotland** |
| Avril McKenzie | **Public Health Scotland** |
| Eloise Nutbrown | **COSLA** |
| Carolyn Scott | **Scottish Government** |
| Charmaine Blaize | **UNISON Black Workers Committee** |
| Rakiya Sulieman | **NHS Lothian and Border** |
| Kimi Jolly | **East and South-East Asian Communities** |
| Sarah Kwan | **East and South- East Asian Communities** |
| Margaret Lance | **Empower Women for Change** |
| Unyimeobong Matthews | **Inspiring Families Scotland** |
| Magda Czarnecka | **FENIKS** |
| Noelia Martinez | **Citizens Right Project** |
| Elaine Cameron | **Refugee Survival Trust** |
| Christine Membi | **Hope Project Scotland** |
| Gina Netto | **Academic / Expert member of SG reference group on COVID / Ethnicity** |
| Kamal Ibrahim | **Scot BAME Network** |
| Pat Greenhough | **Fife Centre for Equalities** |
| Shubhanna Hussain-Ahmed | **Carers Coalition** |
| Vicky Wan | **Children in Scotland** |
| Micheline Brannan | **SCoJEC** |
| Ephraim Borowski | **SCoJEC** |
| Khaleda Noon | **Intercultural Youth Scotland** |
| Ya Nipaa | **Hywupean Project** |
| Nina Munday | **Fife Centre for Equalities** |

**Agenda Meeting Note**

1. **St. Andrew’s Day Campaign**

Rami Ousta introduced the Scotland Winter Festivals Small Grants Fund and Messages to Scotland / Act of Kindness Campaign.

The small grants fund will support local communities to celebrate St. Andrews Day and other key winter festival dates and use these events to initiate and act of kindness in their communities.

More info here: <https://bemis.org.uk/swf-2020-fund-launched/>

1. **Update from Sub-Groups**

Apologies were received from Nina Munday (Collaboration), Fiona Crombie (Menta Health) and Jenni Keenan (Data, Health and Social Outcomes). Danny Boyle and Tanveer Parnez provided updates on these groups. Vicky Wan (CYP) and Charmaine Blaize (Frontline Workers) provided updates on their groups.

All subgroup meeting notes, actions and correspondence can be accessed here: <https://bemis.org.uk/emnrn/subgroups/>

1. **Elizabeth Oldcorn and Avril McKenzie – Public Health Scotland:** *Improving the accessibility and acceptability of the Test and Protect* *system for people from minority ethnic communities*

**General background:** Public Health Scotland (PHS) colleagues provided a paper for attendees to stimulate discussion at the meeting. This paper entitled ‘Questions for EMNRN 29th October’ has been published on the EMNRN dedicated webpage.

PHS colleagues wanted to ascertain and listen to the experiences of minority ethnic communities who have had calls from the test and protect team. PHS also wanted to learn more about minority ethnic communities understanding, observations and perceptions of test and protect more generally.

**The following points were recorded by attendees:**

* There will be language barriers to some people who have been or will be contacted by T+T, how will these be mitigated?
* Digitial isolation has been exacerbated by CV19. How can we contact the people who are more difficult to reach?
* What evidence do T+T hold as to the ethnicities of those who have been required to be contacted by T+T? Can this evidence be shared to inform health messaging in particularly vulnerable groups?
* Have young people from minority ethnic groups been specifically targeted to help share messaging with parents and / or relatives who have ESOL challenges? Routinely in health matter young people provide a key translation service for family members.
* Many people who are subject to NRPF are fearful / cautious of coming forward and engaging with the state. How do we support them to engage with T+T and self-isolate?

**Actions:**

* BEMIS and Dr. Gina Netto (in attendance) to share ongoing concerns about translations and access at the Expert Reference Group on COVID / Ethnicity
* PHS to share information with colleagues and engage network in development of responses.

1. **Carolyn Scott (Scottish Government)**: NRPF – Self Isolation Support Grant

Carolyn Scott provide an update on the Scottish Governments new Self Isolation Support Grant.

If you have been contacted by Test and Protect and asked to self-isolate because of coronavirus (COVID-19), you may be eligible for the Self-Isolation Support Grant.

To be eligible for the grant, you must:

* have been told by Test and Protect to self-isolate as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19), either because you have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive
* be employed or self-employed
* be unable to work from home, and lose income as a result of self-isolation

You must also be getting one or more of these benefits:

* Universal Credit
* Working Tax Credit
* Income-based Employment and Support Allowance
* Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
* Income Support
* Housing Benefit
* Pension Credit

If you have been awarded one of these benefits, but haven't had a payment yet, you will still be eligible for the Self-Isolation Support Grant.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In respect of those subject to NRPF the following was outlined:

* The new SISG is not a public fund for immigration purposes and therefore can be made available to people with NRPF who satisfy other qualifying criteria. However, The Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) is specifically listed in the immigration rules. This means that making a grant to a person with NRPF using SWF legislation can affect their legal status and no award should be made on that basis.
* To address this issue, a discretionary provision has been put in place allowing LAs to award the SISG using section 4 of the Public Health (Scotland) Act 2008.
* The eligibility criteria should remain the same as the general SISG as detailed in SWFG section 11.13 with the exception of requiring entitlement to a qualifying benefit, i.e. the individual:

1. has been required by the Test and Protect Service to self-isolate as a result of COVID-19, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive;
2. are employed or self-employed;
3. are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result; and
4. are defined as low income or would be in receipt of low-income benefits if not eligible for assistance via public funds.

**Attendees responded by outlining the following key points:**

* Further information on how to access the payment would be welcome. Can this be shared with members.
* Huge concerns outlined that the SISG will not be available to everyone affected by NRPF
* Members agreed to write an emergency open letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Minister for Older People and Equalities.

**Action Points:**

* Public letter to Cab Sec and Minister and open to member signatories. Available here: <https://bemis.org.uk/open-letter-to-cabinet-secretary-for-social-security-and-older-people/>
* EMNRN to liaise with SG officials to access up to date criteria for accessing the fund
* BEMIS and Dr. Netto to raise awareness of NRPF / SISG issue at next meeting of the ERG.

**Date of next meeting**: Wed 9th December 10am – 12:30 pm.

1. <https://www.mygov.scot/scottish-welfare-fund/self-isolation-support-grants/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)