

## Covid Science Advice Legacy Project Summary

### Project Aims:

- The Covid-19 Science Advice Legacy project aimed to capture and embed the relevant science advice successes from the Covid-19 response into the science advice system.
- Content was compiled from interviews with GO-Science staff, colleagues across government and our external partners (e.g. SAGE participants, National Academies).
- 18 Covid-19 science advice successes were identified under 5 themes (outside of our emergency response systems). Lessons learned for the SAGE emergency response are being addressed through the GO-Science SAGE development project.

### Implementation of Findings:

- Successes demonstrate the mechanics of the government science advice system has contributed to high impact, timely delivery in an emergency response situation.
- We have succeeded in building on successes that were in-train pre-Covid-19, used the unique circumstances presented by Covid-19 to enhance others, and created new opportunities to be leveraged through the science advice system.
- This work provides a basis of evidence to support GO-Science in improving science capability, can feed into other areas of government which are undertaking similar projects (e.g. Cabinet Office, UK Health Security Agency), and will be of interest externally.

Government Office for Science

### 18 Key Successes:

#### Delivery of Science Advice

- Establishment of the National Core Studies (NCS)
- Use of the National Academies' (NAs) independent expertise
- Integration and role of Social / Behavioural Science

#### Science Communication

- Transparency of SAGE papers
- Engagement with the cross-government policy community
- Engagement with the Devolved Administrations (DAs)
- Engagement with Parliamentarians
- Increase in Scientific literacy across Government
- Media Engagement with scientific issues
- International Engagement on Covid science

#### Structural Capabilities

- GO-Science Position and Role in Government
- Government Chief Scientific Adviser (GCSA) Impact
- Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) Network - role and impact
- GOS & GCSA catalytic role in establishing critical x-govt response functions to pandemic

#### The SAGE Model

- Multi-disciplinary / diverse approach, involving peer to peer challenge, to arrive at a consensus

#### GO-Science Operations

- The SAGE Commissioning Process – link with Cabinet Office/other government departments
- Use of Public Sector Research Establishments (PSREs) / Government Science Partners to increase capacity/capability for the response

### Current & Future Action:

- Ensure the NCS model is considered for use in wider emergency response frameworks
- Scope how NAs can be commissioned on specific topics formally & develop a GO-Science strategy for engagement
- Strengthen use of social science in government

- Culture change to shift to greater transparency relating to science advice in government
- Scientific literacy developed across government – ensure specialists have access to research journals, data, etc
- Review how the CSA network engages with the DAs & support the establishment of Northern Ireland CSA
- Maintenance of close ties formed with media & ensure engagement/understanding on future science issues
- Scope how best to exploit improved international relations

- Maintain ability to provide independent science advice to government – push forward key initiatives (Science Capability Review, National Science & Technology Council etc.)
- Ensure legacy aspects are considered in science capability plans & proposals which support CSAs
- A core function of GCSA role should be to independently influence, intervene & affect change, where appropriate and relevant, outside of their immediate span of control – support for delivery of this should be built into future operating models

- Scope further work via the Case for Change that could support use of a multidisciplinary approach in science advice systems
- Updated Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees and Councils (CoPSAC) to support scrutiny of science & working towards research publishing principles in government

- Robust & sustainable management of commissions during Covid-19 and working to improve systems for commissioning science advice from the centre, outside emergency response mode
- Develop links with PSREs as a people resource and the Policy Forum & Value Framework to improve value to wider government