

## **NI COVID 19 Modelling Group Conference Call – 27 October 2020**

### **Attendees**

Paul Montgomery DoH (acting chairperson)  
Paul McWilliams SIB  
Janice Bailie PHA  
Declan Bradley PHA  
Adele Marshall QUB

### **Key issues discussed**

#### ***Update***

- Paul Montgomery provided an update on the latest position in respect of the key indicators of the virus. The 7 day rolling average for new Covid-19 cases appears to have plateaued at just over 1,000 per day over the past week. Although there is some evidence that the number of cases is falling, this reflects the day to day movement in tests with the 7 day rolling average for the proportion of tests with a positive result for the virus not yet falling.
- The previous increase in cases continues to be reflected in the number of hospital admissions which remains on an upward trend and is now above the Wave 1 peak.
- The number of cases in the Derry City & Strabane Local Government District (LGDs) continues to fall (19-25 Oct compared with 12-18 Oct) with reductions also seen for Belfast and Newry, Mourne & Down. Paul McWilliams advised that real time data would suggest that the R value had fallen below 1 for all but two (out of 11) LGDs.
- The group agreed that the latest estimate of the R number is between 0.8-1.1 (1.0-1.3 last week) for cases and 1.1-1.3 (1.2-1.5) for hospital inpatients.

#### ***AOB***

- Paul McWilliams indicated that he was due to receive data in respect of 350 of the 500 sample for the first cycle of the Contact Survey that has been commissioned to measure the impact of the current regulations. Although this should allow an estimate of the change in R to be calculated in the coming days, Adele Marshall highlighted the need to ensure that the partial sample was representative. Adele and her team are providing assistance to Paul in terms of the analysis of the returns from the two cycles of the Contact Survey of children.
- Paul is continuing to work with the contact tracing team to improve performance. The target to contact 80% of individuals within 48 hours is now being met with 22% self-tracing- the aim is to increase this to 70%.

- Janice Bailie indicated that the Covid Infection Survey continues to report results with increased numbers participating. The plan to analyse a further sample of residual biochemical specimens remains on course for the second week of November
- Adele Marshall provided an update on the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) Data Analyst Working Group where she represents NI. One area being considered is contact tracing amongst university students including the potential impact of them returning home for Christmas. Adele indicated that while this was expected to be a less significant issue for NI than in the rest of the UK, there was interest in the impact of the greater tendency for NI students to return home at weekends. However, tracking university students was challenging because it was often unclear where they were resident at a particular point in time.
- Declan Bradley indicated that a meeting was being arranged with Tom Ward from the JBC/Cabinet Office to discuss data sources and suggested that Adele and a representative from the department might wish to attend.