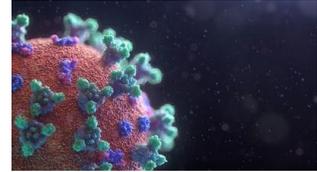




**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

**CENTRE FOR  
EVIDENCE AND  
SOCIAL INNOVATION**



## **CESI RAPID RESPONSE TO COVID-19 WORKSHOPS (20-22 April 2020)**

The **Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation (CESI)** at Queen's University Belfast, an interdisciplinary, cross-University network of over 120 leading scholars and researchers, continues to draw on over 25 years of experience in research into finding solutions for key societal issues involving children, families and communities, by responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with innovative collaborative approaches, amongst our membership and in partnership with sector professionals, policy makers and service providers.

We have very recently conducted three interdisciplinary Rapid Response workshops to establish how best we optimize our response to the pandemic as a Centre, and these workshops reflect the diversity of our research expertise across our three strands: **Health and Wellbeing**, **Quality Education** and **Sustainable Cities and Communities**. Included in this brief is a flavour of the discussion and potential research ideas that have emerged. Please contact us if you are interested in joining the grant writing teams in taking these ideas forward.



**IMPACT AREA 1:****Identifying research priorities for the older and vulnerable adult living in the COVID-19 outbreak – Lead: Prof Kevin Brazil (SoNM)**

This session drew colleagues from across two Faculties and from a range of Schools including **School of Nursing and Midwifery, Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Pharmacy** and **Centre for Public Health** to discuss a range of potential research priorities, with the intention that 1 or more application(s) will emerge. Please contact **Niki McKnight** [n.mcknight@qub.ac.uk](mailto:n.mcknight@qub.ac.uk) or **Kevin Brazil** [k.brazil@qub.ac.uk](mailto:k.brazil@qub.ac.uk) for further information or to become involved.

**PROPOSED ACTIVITIES**

- Conducting of secondary data analysis of existing data sets (e.g. NILS, NICOLA) and to develop a robust but rapid survey using existing sampling frames (e.g. AGE NI) to address key domains of likely importance to the lives of older and vulnerable people living through COVID 19 lockdown, isolation and social distancing.
- Development of a coherent range of domains reflecting the interdisciplinary, Cross-Faculty range of expertise of the group: from both physical (decline in fitness, frailty, mobility issues) and psychological (suicide, addictions, domestic abuse etc.) perspectives.
- Consideration of more long-term, longitudinal implications for this cohort, post-COVID.

**ACTIONS & GRANT WRITING OPPORTUNITIES**

- Development of a pragmatically designed study using a rapid response survey/secondary data analysis methodology alongside the modelling of existing data – to provide an empirical/theoretical basis for identifying/targeting/digitizing relevant existing interventions, with group members leading key areas. One example, regarding physical health, would involve an intervention along the lines of a virtual forum/app, teaching, encouraging and monitoring exercise at home, personalised and tailored to individual needs. Currently we have CESI members already delivering home exercise videos/classes for other cohorts, and it makes sense to utilise these existing resources. A number of potential grant capture opportunities are being actively explored to proceed with this work.

**IMPACT AREA 2:****Communities – Responses to COVID-19 and the Legacy Issues of COVID-19**  
– *Lead: Prof Brendan Murtagh (SoNBE)*

The session involved all 3 Faculties with 30 participants from **SoNM, SSESW, Campbell UK and Ireland, Natural and Built Environment, Law and School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics**. Please contact **Niki McKnight** [n.mcknight@qub.ac.uk](mailto:n.mcknight@qub.ac.uk) or **Brendan Murtagh** [b.murtagh@qub.ac.uk](mailto:b.murtagh@qub.ac.uk) for further information or to become involved.

**PROPOSED ACTIVITIES**

- Key ideas to emerge included tracing a specific community or communities comparatively over the life of the virus and trace post-lockdown effects to examine how the 'community' in a broad sense dealt with the preparatory stage, full impact and in the transition out of the virus situation.
- Specific focus on the adaptation and resilience within communities to respond (individualised responses to survival versus collaborative, if low-level, responses) to needs of the most vulnerable and isolated. The extent to which complex problems and hidden harms (e.g. domestic violence, child abuse and suicide) remain largely unaltered (or deteriorated), even with an active community response, is one area to investigate.
- Evaluation of whether some communities proved more resilient than others over the life of the pandemic; what explains their adaptive capacity; what this might mean for the future of community development, risk and mitigation; and are factors such as the socio-economic, ethno-religious, formal versus informal group structures, and community relationships with the state significant.

**ACTIONS & GRANT WRITING OPPORTUNITIES**

- The CESI core team contacted The Market Development Association (MDA) with whom they had already been working and are planning a longitudinal community study to track responses over the COVID 19 period and its legacy. A range of small, medium and larger grant options are currently being actively explored, including this work extending to other locations in NI. For further information, contact Niki McKnight [n.mcknight@qub.ac.uk](mailto:n.mcknight@qub.ac.uk)

### **IMPACT AREA 3:**

#### **Educational Underachievement – Lead: Dr Laura Dunne (SSESW)**

This session was well attended with representatives from all 3 University Faculties alongside input from colleagues in the Public Health Agency. Schools and Centres present were **SoNM, SSESW, SoNBE, Campbell UK and Ireland, CPH and Psychology**. Please contact Niki McKnight [n.mcknight@qub.ac.uk](mailto:n.mcknight@qub.ac.uk) or Laura Dunne [l.dunne@qub.ac.uk](mailto:l.dunne@qub.ac.uk) for further information or to become involved.

#### **PROPOSED ACTIVITIES**

- Follow-up comparison on school readiness data already collected (led by Dr Mary Dallat, PHA).
- In terms of pregnancy and neonatal issues within the current COVID climate, a proposal to investigate changes in self-report mental health and domestic abuse and how these relate to adverse neonatal outcomes, potentially using the NIMATS database through the HBS to publish on self-report mental health and neonatal outcomes.
- The impact – post-crisis - of socio-economic status and access to resources: investigating these factors (and population density) in relation to outcomes.
- ADRC involvement in looking into the WiSE project data.
- A follow-up to the Digital Divide rapid survey work conducted at Maynooth, and its possible extension to Northern Ireland.
- Consultation with teachers and pupils in NI to explore the COVID context in NI schools.
- Exploration of the impact on pupils in exam years, the social impact of school closures and the impact on less affluent children, the impact of transitions and upon school reopening's.
- A collaborative concept note on all of the above proposals, between CESI colleagues in SSESW and CPH (and with PHA involvement), to be forwarded for consideration by Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee.

#### **ACTIONS AND GRANT WRITING OPPORTUNITIES**

A range of activity has commenced - please contact Laura Dunne and Niki McKnight for information or if you are interested in joining the grant writing teams.

