Note re. RAJAR Q1 Processing

The COVID-19 emergency and subsequent lockdown coincided with the final two weeks of the RAJAR Q1 fieldwork period. RAJAR recovered a large number of diaries from Week 12 including many paper diaries, which were retrieved by mailing pre-paid return envelopes to participants.

Mindful of the increasing uncertainty RAJAR took the decision to prioritise online diaries in Week 13. The official instruction to suspend face-to-face fieldwork activity occurred just as Week 13 placements were getting underway and it was only possible to work a very limited number of assignments.

This meant that although RAJAR had diaries from every week, there were gaps in our coverage at the end of the period. Typically, the final weeks of the quarter see the placement of a number of assignments that are specifically targeted at areas or groups that are predicted to otherwise experience a deficit, and several of these important assignments were unable to be worked.

The data from such targeted assignments is crucial to enable RAJAR's highly complex weighting process to operate successfully. In the event of data deficits, there are recognised statistical techniques that can be applied to the data prior to processing.

The representativeness and general health of the Q1 sample was assessed. It was decided that the most sensible and fairest course of action to counter the imbalances caused by the shortfalls in Weeks 12 and 13 was to import the requisite data from the corresponding weeks in 2019 and configure it to fit into the Q1 2020 design. The outcome is a normalised data set, with a typical profile, and which passed through the weighting process without issue.

Given the restrictions on social contact imposed in order to combat COVID-19, it is anticipated that Q1 2020 will be the bedrock of the RAJAR data for more than one quarter. This action has been approved by the RAJAR Board on which all sides of the industry are represented.