



PFRB (18)12
Pandemic Flu Readiness Board (PFRB)

**Held in 10 Victoria Street
Wednesday 14 November 2018, 1530-1700**

Minutes

Departments present:

Chair

Katharine Hammond (CO)

Apologies from Emma Reed (DHSC)

CABINET OFFICE
CABINET OFFICE Comms
DCMS
DEFRA
DfT
DHSC

BEIS
HMPPS
HOME OFFICE
MHCLG
MoD
NHS ENGLAND
PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND
SCOTLAND OFFICE

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH
OFFICE

Via phone

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT
NORTHERN IRELAND
WELSH GOVERNMENT
DfE
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

Apologies

(Not recorded due to IT disruption at Cabinet Office)

Secretariat

CCS



Item 1 – Welcome, Introduction, Review of Actions and Progress Update

1. KATHARINE HAMMOND (CO) opened the twelfth meeting of the Pandemic Flu Readiness Board (PFRB) by welcoming all attendees, and outlining the purpose of the meeting. It had been 3 months since the last meeting the last meeting of PFRB was postponed from September in order to do an assessment of the priority deliverables for NSC (THRC) by February, balanced with the increasing EU Exit work.
2. KATHARINE HAMMOND told the board that contingency planning for EU Exit has increased significantly over the last few months and this is expected to continue.
3. Since the last PFRB, DHSC and CCS colleagues visited Edinburgh in early October to meet Scottish Government colleagues, to discuss their progress on the various work streams. A number of topics were discussed, including progress on work streams 1 and 2, and the Bill.
4. On 10th October, Wednesday Morning Colleagues had a discussion on Pandemic Flu. This exposed Senior Leaders to some of the policy issues addressed by this group. Perm Secs appeared engaged and acknowledged that the impacts of a pandemic would be felt across all sectors, as well as the emotional difficulties that will be felt by staff in their own departments. The Permanent Secretaries agreed that a table-top exercise would take place in the New Year.
5. Turning to **PAPER 1**, KATHARINE HAMMOND invited [redacted] NR to update the Board on the outstanding actions (Action 112) on school closure policy.
6. TONY HARDMAN informed the Board that DfE were aiming to complete legal instructions by Monday Nov 19 with a view to having the OFFICE FOR PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL (OPC) finalise the clause by mid-December. There are ongoing discussions with senior colleagues on the inclusion of Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) institutions. DfE have put advice to Ministers to exclude HE and FE from the power.
7. [redacted] NR (DHSC) welcomed the commitment to have legal instructions drawn imminently and emphasised the need to give OPC sufficient time. The Board was informed that SPI-M did not recommend the closing of Universities, informing DfE's decision. For 16 – 18 year olds, there is a legal requirement to attend a FE institution, which may cause difficulties for that age-group. KATHERINE HAMMOND asked DfE to consider alternative policy levers e.g. relaxing enforcement regulation, to achieve the same outcome.

- **ACTION:** DfE to consider alternative policy levers e.g. relaxing enforcement regulation, to reduce risk of 16 – 18 year old students attending Further Education when all schools are closed.



8. KATHERINE HAMMOND turned to actions 114, 119, 132, 136, and 138. NEIL PATTINSON (HOME OFFICE) told the board there have been no policy changes to the paper presented to the board at the last PFRB on policy resourcing during a pandemic.

9. **NR** (MOD) reiterated the position that the MOD would mostly likely look at national priorities rather than specific local demands on resource, and that the London Military Pandemic Flu exercise earlier in the year had revealed that available resource would not meet potential demand. The board was informed that lessons from the Power Resilience exercises could have relevance for the PFRB programme and should be taken on board.

• **ACTION:** CCS to work with MOD and HOME OFFICE to outline a package of what MOD, Police and FRS could offer in the event of a Pandemic and provide an update at the next Board meeting.

10. KATHERINE HAMMOND referred to PAPER 2 (dashboard) and turned to the work stream leads to update the Board on progress since the last PFRB.

- WS 1 (Healthcare): CHLOE SELLWOOD (NHS ENGLAND) updated that internal discussions were now underway in NHS England on the service facing guidance, including clinical assurance of the guidance.
- WS 2 (Community Care): **NR** (DHSC) updated that good progress continues to be made and that the project team were now considering how to mainstream the work.
- WS 3 (Excess Deaths): **NR** (CCS) updated that the draft framework is almost complete. This will be going to the Excess Deaths Stakeholder Engagement Group shortly.
- WS4 (Sector Resilience): **NR** (CCS) updated that work is underway to mainstream this work.
- WS 5 (Moral and ethical): **NR** (DHSC) – Item on agenda.
- WS 5 (Communications): **NR** (DHSC) updated that the Public Health Communications Strategy was near-finalised, having received sign-off from 4 CMOs earlier this year. Work on year 2 Communications had been deprioritised due to resource pressures and would be discussed further under item 3.
- WS 5 (Bill): **NR** (DHSC) / **NR** (CCS) updated that a number of clauses have now been finalised and that the UK-Government side of the draft Bill was on-track for delivery by the end of the year. However, colleagues in SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT have legal resourcing issues which required a further review of the Devolved Administration timelines.
- Year 2 – 2011 UK Pandemic Flu Strategy Refresh: **NR** (DHSC)- Item on agenda



- Year 2 – Pan Flu Document Restructure: **NR** (DHSC) updated that the proposed structure had now been shared with Government Departments for comment and approval.
- Year 2 – Pan Flu Resilience Standard: **NR** (DHSC) updated that the Resilience Standard was out for consultation and that DHSC would welcome MHCLG’s support in encouraging responses.

• **ACTION:** DHSC to ensure that the Public Health Communications Strategy has been shared with the Public Health Institutions in each of the Devolved Administrations for comment.

ACTION: MHCLG to encourage LRFs to respond to the ongoing consultation on the Pandemic Flu Resilience Standard.

Item 2 – Work Programme Forward Look Prioritisation

11. KATHARINE HAMMOND turned to **NR** to introduce the **PAPER 3** on the work programme forward look. The Chair reminded the board that prioritisation should not mean that other areas are deprioritised and this exercise is to assist with allocating resources as Exit approaches.
12. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT informed the board that legal resource will not be available till the end of the reporting year and this will impact on progress on policy instructions as well.
13. CAROL MCCALL requested that departments ensure better engagement between policy and communication colleagues.
14. **NR** noted EU Exit may change the nature of the PFRB programme e.g. severe disruption to transport or supply chains would require the policy on countermeasures vaccines to be examined. CHAIR agreed that the board should keep a close eye on the potential impact of EU Exit on the PFRB programme but reassured colleagues that CCS has looked into concurrent risks around March 2019.
15. WELSH GOVERNMENT requested that the Pandemic Flu Resilience Standard be Four Nations. **NR** explained that colleagues from the DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS can transpose the England specific standards into their respective contexts.

Item 3 – 2011 UK Pandemic Flu Strategy Refresh (DHSC)

16. KATHERINE HAMMOND invited **NR** to introduce **PAPER 4** on the refresh of the 2011 UK Pandemic Flu Strategy. The board was informed that the focus of the refresh is to arrive a more coherent narrative and a streamlined & strategic text. This will be a 4 Nation’s strategy.



17. HMPPS informed DHSC that have separately updated their section of the strategy and this is close to receiving clearance. HMPPS will share text with DHSC.
18. CHLOE SELLWOOD welcomed the refresh and cautioned that the timeline may slip due to pressures from EU Exit.

- **Action:** DHSC to share the existing text of the Strategy when commissioning updated text.

Item 4 – Moral and Ethical Advisory Group (DHSC)

19. KATHARINE HAMMOND turned to to present **PAPER 5**, on the background paper and the Terms of Reference for the Moral and Ethical Advisory Group.
20. The board had a discussion on ensuring the advisory group adequately represents all 4 nations. SCOTTISH GOVNT asked that the approach to the membership of the group is not solely England focussed and the DAs are engaged throughout the process. The board recognised that further work is required to outline how the group would interact with devolved administrations.
21. NHS ENGLAND welcomed the cross-sectoral approach and offered to help with drawing up the membership list.

ACTION: DHSC to update the Terms of Reference of the group to reflect engagement with the Devolved Administrations.

ACTION: ALL members to share recommendations for membership of the Moral and Ethical Advisory Group with DHSC and MHCLG.

Item 5 – Update on the local tier engagement forum (MHCLG)

22. KATHERINE HAMMOND invited to present **PAPER 6** and **PAPER 7**.
23. updated the board that engagement with LRF's has been positive and is gaining traction. 16 LRFs attended the September Pandemic Flu LRF Engagement Group with others providing written responses. More thinking is required around exercising to ensure that exercising plans are both flexible and scaleable. The next engagement forum will be in January.
24. also talked about how the LRFs are keen to stay involved and are considering how to share their learning more widely.



25. CHAIR suggested that MHCLG capture those who are not engaging. NR
took away an action to look into engagement data from Resilience Direct on the Standards. CHAIR encouraged the group to go explore more than information sharing and think of ways to improve resilience.

26. WELSH GOVERNMENT told the board that an engagement forum for Welsh LRF's is also ongoing with plans and checklist on the agenda at the last meeting.

- **Action:** DHSC, CCS and MHCLG to produce a briefing document for LRF Liaison Advisors to engage LRFs that are less engaged with this risk.

Item 6 – AOB and Next Steps

27. KATHARINE HAMMOND invited the board to raise any further issues.

28. The next PFRB is in early January. The agenda will include:

- Proposed NSC (THRC) update on Year 2
- Written update on all work streams from the Devolved Administrations
- Update on the Draft Pandemic Flu Bill
- Excess Deaths Framework
- Package of Military and Police support in an Influenza Pandemic

**Cabinet Office and Department of Health and Social Care
November 2018**