

INFORMATION			
Covid-19: EMERGENCY LEGISLATION			
<i>Date:</i>	<i>09 March 2020</i>	<i>From:</i>	<i>Katharine Hammond, Mark Sweeney Cabinet Secretariat</i>
<i>Deadline:</i>	<i>10 March 2020</i>		

SUMMARY

1. Covid-19 looks increasingly likely to become a global pandemic, although this is not yet fully certain. The UK's approach is underpinned by science. We have a clear plan for a phased response, guided by clinical and scientific advice, as set out in the Action Plan published last week.
2. To most effectively manage a Coronavirus outbreak in the UK we will need to introduce new fast-tracked legislation. A DHSC-led Bill is being prepared at pace, with input from other departments.
3. This is a four nations Bill, and the Devolved Administrations have been engaged with at both Official and Ministerial level on the proposed clauses, as well as the timetable for the Bill. It is important that the proposals in the Bill reflect a policy consensus so that the public feels there is equitable treatment across the UK.
4. Work to finalise content and draft provisions has developed at pace. Once the Bill measures have been agreed, engagement with the Usual Channels will begin in order to agree a fast-tracked passage in order to achieve Royal Assent by 31 March, ahead of the expected peak.

BACKGROUND

5. Contingency work has previously taken place to ensure the UK would be prepared for a severe influenza pandemic. DHSC and CCS led a cross-Government work programme, scoping the provisions to be included in a free-standing draft Pandemic Flu Bill.
6. This draft Pandemic Flu Bill has formed the basis for the bespoke Covid-19 Bill. Departments were asked to confirm that previously discounted measures are not needed for a Covid-19 response, and what else might be required in a reasonable worst case scenario specific to this virus.