



OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

## Paper 2: Terms of Reference

### Cross-UK Pandemic Disease Capabilities Board (PDCB)

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July 2021

#### Background

1. The Pandemic Flu Readiness Board (PFRB) was established in 2017 following Exercise Cygnus, to deliver a cross-governmental programme of work to increase the UK's readiness to manage the effects of a severe pandemic influenza outbreak. Since completion of its work programme and following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the work of the PFRB has been paused since January 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the need for a cross-UK government and cross-UK approach to preparing for a broad range of pandemics, including but not limited to pandemic 'flu. Forward looking activity is beginning to re-start in departments across Whitehall and the devolved administrations.
2. The Pandemic Disease Capabilities Board (PDCB) will be established to focus on identifying critical capabilities across the UK for pandemic disease preparedness that should be maintained, developed or initiated. These will then be reviewed after wider decisions about pandemic preparedness governance are taken.

#### Scope and Responsibilities

3. The PDCB will oversee the following key areas:
  - Delivery of preparations for the cross-UK government impacts of pandemics and other significant disease outbreaks with cross-sectoral impacts. This will include the development of capabilities that contain and/or mitigate the impacts of pandemic and High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) hazards. The board will reflect capabilities that were developed to address 'flu and COVID-19, while ensuring future plans are applicable to a broad range of pandemic and HCID scenarios with a cross-sectoral impact.
  - Provide the forum for continued cross-sectoral partnership working on pandemic and HCID outbreak preparedness, including with the devolved administrations; clarifying boundaries of responsibility between UK departments and the DAs; facilitating collaborative working, where appropriate; and managing the interdependencies between UK Government departments and the DAs.
4. The PDCB's work on preparedness planning takes place within a broader context of work to strengthen the UK's resilience to a range of risks and threats to health and transition to the UK Health Security Agency. The scope, responsibilities, and operation of the PDCB's work may be revised to take into account this evolving context.

## Membership

5. The following UK Government departments and organisations will be represented on the board, with the requisite level of engagement to be determined by the specifics of each department/organisation's role in pandemic preparedness:

Core members:

- DHSC (Co-Chair)
- CCS, Cabinet Office (Co-Chair)
- UK Health Security Agency
- NHS England
- MHCLG
- MoD
- GO-Science
- Home Office
- HM Treasury
- MoJ
- DfT
- BEIS
- DEFRA
- HMRC
- DfE
- DWP
- DCMS
- FCDO
- Health and Safety Executive
- COVID-19 Taskforce, Cabinet Office
- Wales Office
- Scotland Office
- Northern Ireland Office
- Welsh Government
- Scottish Government
  
- Northern Ireland Executive The territorial offices and the devolved administrations sit on the PDCB to ensure that the interdependencies between approaches to pandemic and HCID preparedness across the four nations are fully understood and that best practice can be exchanged, whilst recognising that decision-making and reporting on devolved matters is the responsibility of each of the devolved administrations.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Members

6. The membership of the PDCB is intended to reflect the breadth of the UK government's and the DAs' responsibility for coordinating work to develop capabilities that aim to both:
- contain or suppress a pandemic such that it never reaches or approaches an unmitigated reasonable worst-case scenario (RWCS);

- respond to and manage any outbreak where this does not prove possible.
7. Membership of the PDCB is formed of officials at Director (SCS2) grade from across UK government departments and the DAs. Members of the PDCB will represent the interests of their departments or DA, and the sector(s) for which their department or DA is accountable to the UK parliament or relevant devolved legislature. Members should, therefore, be prepared to represent the interests of their entire department or administration and act as a conduit of information.
  8. There will be representations from departments and devolved administrations to manage the wider consequences of pandemics. This programme of work will be led by a workplan, the scope and actions of which will be developed with departments and DAs at the inception of the board, focussing on identifying critical capabilities that should be maintained, developed or initiated (while noting that DA Ministers will make their own decisions about matters within devolved competence).

### **Governance and Accountability**

9. The board will report progress to the UK Government's National Security Council NSC via the Secretary of State for Health and Minister for the Cabinet Office, who will receive regular progress updates in parallel. Separate arrangements will be developed to facilitate inter administration communication and collaboration at ministerial level; communications before NSC meetings will enable UK Ministers to be briefed of the views of DA Ministers. The governance for the board does not replace individual departments' or DAs' governance arrangements for their own pandemic preparedness programmes. The primary focus of this board will be on ensuring the successful delivery of the work programme, its constituent parts, and their respective deliverables.

### **Meeting Frequency**

10. The PDCB will meet once every two months over the next 12 months, unless circumstances require otherwise. The secretariat will be provided by the Department of Health and Social Care and Cabinet Office on a rotating basis.

[Date ToRs approved by Board.]