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Subject: COMMISSION: COVID-19 and ethnicity

Dear Permanent Secretary colleagues,

Following a very helpful session on Monday in CabSec(O) where we discussed the item on groups disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, I am delighted to let you know that I have taken up the role of SRO on this issue across Government. I look forward to working with you and your departments in this role.

It was fantastic to hear and see real support for this work in Monday's meeting. We have decided to delay the COVID-O discussion on this item, in order to give departments more time to work up proposals in detail, and to give time for stress-testing the proposals, through a Star Chamber process and engagement with staff networks etc. I have attached the CabSec(O) paper to this email. The data it includes, and the recommendations set out on its penultimate slides, should provide a 'starter for 10' to launch responses to this commission.

I am emailing to commission you and your departments to conduct this work, The deadline for most returns is CoP Thursday 3rd September. However, we are asking for returns on the 3rd ask (for contact details) by CoP Tuesday 1st September. There is such urgency because we expect COVID-O to discuss the matter at its meeting on 10 September.

There are three main asks of departments:

First, for all departments to provide detailed recommendations (with options for high, medium and low ambition packages) for inclusion in the COVID-O paper.

So that Ministers have options to consider, **please work up detailed recommendations, across three tiers of potential response packages (low [minimal spend, quick to action], medium [more resource / spend needed, bigger impact] and high ambition [greater level of resource/ spend needed, but substantially higher potential impact.]**). Returns should also indicate departments' preferred package for recommendation.

Each package should:

- a. Provide specific information about proposed interventions and the problems they intend to address
- b. Provide information about expected costs, including whether these can be met from existing budgets, noting that for the moment these will be ballpark figures
- c. Set out implementation timelines (how quickly could this be brought into force?)
- d. Provide information about interdependencies (e.g. where the proposal requires cross-government collaboration etc.)

One of the recommendations from CabSec (o) was for departments to develop proposals in collaboration with their staff networks, given their expertise and insight on the issues affecting disproportionately impacted groups. I'd therefore be grateful if **departments could ensure staff networks are involved in designing/ cocreating recommendations.**

Second, for each department to provide information on what you are currently doing to address the impacts on disproportionately impacted groups. This will help build a cohesive picture of all of the activity that is happening across government.

Specifically, please could all departments to provide information setting out: