

Briefing Note for Meeting:		On: 05/05/2020
<i>CDL/FMs/TO Secretaries of State Meeting</i>		
Agenda <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Four nations approach to social distancing measures2. Continuing a common approach in the next phase3. Communications4. Next steps		
Attendees: DA Ministers will be in attendance		
Authors: Name Redacted and Name Redacted		

Points to raise

- **Agenda Item 1: Four Nations Approach to Social Distancing measures**

For any guidance to be UK-wide it must reflect devolved competencies and there should coordination to enable a cross UK approach that takes account of devolved responsibilities.

- **Agenda Item 2: Continuing a Common Approach in the Next Phase**

I'm sure that with imagination and energy we can address the technical issues about interoperability between the DHSC app and devolved NHS IT systems.

We are in agreement on broad principles at present.

UKG and SG should speak with the same voice where we can and where the evidence supports it. This will help our collective messages.

To be effective we must present a simple, clear and united message, one UK and we need to be coordinated on the policies that influence these.

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Even where we are taking different decisions we need to make sure we are coordinated.

- **Communications**

[No further points to make to those raised above]

- **Next Steps**

[No points to make]

Background:

Agenda Items 1 and 2: Four Nations Approach to Social Distancing measures and Common Approach

We understand CDL will seek to understand the DA's respective positions in relation to the social distancing review this week, and will seek to lay the groundwork for cooperation on policies such as the NHS App. It is possible the safer working guidance will also be raised at this meeting by the DAs. The Scottish government have been keen to engage with UKG and stakeholders on this guidance and also plan to issue further sectoral guidance in the future.

The First Minister set out further information on the Scottish Government's approach to easing lockdown measures today. The publication was clear there were no decisions or changes imminent for the review this week but set out the broad options for subsequent decisions. In particular the FM has been clear that suppressing the virus and reducing the harm it does to people is her starting point. She has not closed down the option of UK wide pacing but neither has she closed down the option to do this differently in Scotland. She has particularly cited schools as an example.

The First Minister is likely to seek more information about decision points and the PM's statement on the roadmap on Sunday– we understand no.10 are still considering these points.

BEIS' Safer Work Places paper

BEIS 'safer work places' was paper presented to EBRIG on 30 April which updated the Committee on the substantial engagement exercise conducted by BEIS over the last week with employers, BROs and unions and next steps on developing guidance for businesses and employees. It is not clear the extent to which Scottish stakeholders have been engaged. The DAs are likely to ask about the status of the guidance and whether the guidance will be UK wide or England only. OSSS officials are keen that the guidance should be UK wide provided there is sufficient engagement with the DAs. We know stakeholders are likely to support an approach that encourages collaboration and consistency.

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Border and Health Monitoring

CDL may also ask for views on border measures being considered by the UK departments, but we understand is not seeking to ask the DAs for an immediate decision at this meeting. There are two possible mandatory elements:

- Requiring travellers to supply contact and travel details
 - Requiring travellers to self-isolate for 14 days and then to use the NHSX app.
- Both would require the DAs to make regulations, in the case of the SG under the Coronavirus Act 2020. As the SG has called for unspecified border measures in its first framework for decision making it seems unlikely that it will object in principle, but it may not want to adopt all of the measures, and it is very likely to want to control when they are switched on and off. For the measures to be effective they need to be implemented to the same timetable.

The WG may ask for scientific evidence that quarantining will have an effect on infection control. Quarantining is only likely to do so once the infection has subsided significantly in the UK but is still flourishing in other countries.

Scottish Government's Test, Trace, Isolate, Support Strategy

The SG published its Coronavirus (COVID-19): test, trace, isolate, support strategy on 4 May.

The strategy says that the SG would like greater involvement in the development of the DHSC tracking app but that that app is an enhancement not a substitute for the SG's strategy. It has also expressed technical concerns about the ability of the app to interoperate with NHS Scotland IT systems.

Instead the SG is to promote a web based tool which will allow symptomatic persons to input details of people that they have been in close contact with, and for these to be sent directly and securely to contact tracing teams. By contrast the DHSC app enables persons who a symptomatic persons has been in contact with anonymously to be traced via their mobile phones providing the phones have the app. The two systems are complementary but the SG has chosen to promote its publically.

CD may invite the DAs to commit to endorsing the DHSC app. For that app to be effective it needs to be used by at least 50% of the UK population and it needs the DAs to promote it actively. If CDL can secure the agreement of the DAs to interface the DHSC app with their NHS IT systems and to promote, subject to technical issues being resolved that will be a good outcome. Promotion may best be done by some form of joint branding.

Today, (5 May) the SG have published an update paper on COVID 19: Framework for Decision Making – Further Information.

A brief summary of the document follows:

While the evidence indicates that there is minimal latitude to change current restrictions in Scotland before the coming review date of 7 May, which marks the end of the current three week cycle, SG are using this time to consider a range of themes and options for changes when it does become safe to introduce them. SG will have assessed the options fully and made the necessary preparations for implementation if the evidence suggests that its possible for any of them ahead of the next end of cycle review date of 28 May.

The publication announces the launch of an online tool for the public to submit their ideas and reflections.

After initial introductory statements about the decision making framework the document goes on to outline the evidence base for Covid-19 pandemic in Scotland and then outline the options being considered for social distancing easing.

The five themes are as follows;

- Changes to advice about staying at home;
- Changes to advice about visiting other households
- Options for resuming care and support for those most affected by the current restrictions
- Changes affecting businesses that have been subject to restrictions or closure
- Options for allowing pupils to return to school