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FOR INFORMATION

SC(20)14

RESTRICTED HANDLING

SCOTTISH CABINET

SCANCE: 28 JANUARY 2020
(Scottish Cabinet Analysis of News and Current Events)

Current Issues

1. Key current issues across portfolios which Cabinet Secretaries may wish to be aware of or discuss at Cabinet are set out below:

DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND EDUCATION AND SKILLS

[This week]



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10. There is an evolving situation following **the outbreak of a novel coronavirus emanating from Wuhan City in Hubei province in China**. As of 26 January 2020, the World Health Organisation reported 2015 confirmed cases including 56 deaths. The total number of cases from mainland China is 1975, of which 324 are severe. There are a number of countries/regions which have reported patients who have tested positive, including Hong Kong, Macau, Taipei, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Nepal, Singapore, Vietnam, the USA, Australia and France. There are currently no confirmed cases in the UK.

As of 26 January 2020, the UK Government reported that a total of 73 people have tested negative for the coronavirus in the UK. It has been agreed that UK Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) will be the custodian of patient data, and all administrations will report only the numbers of concluded cases and the number of positive and negative cases. There will be no reporting publicly of the numbers under investigation at any given time although this number will be shared across the four nations for planning purposes. Updated UK figures will be received daily at 1.03 p.m.

This is a continually evolving situation. At 9.00 a.m. on 27 January, a total of seven cases had been concluded in Scotland, all of which proved negative. These are included in the 73 cases tested across the UK. Four other cases in Scotland are under investigation.

A Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBRA) meeting was held on Friday, 24 January, chaired by the UK Secretary of State for Health. The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, and the Chief Medical Officer dialled in to represent Scottish Government interests. Ministers from Wales and Northern Ireland were also represented. It was agreed that all administrations will share information before issuing it, and information relating to Devolved Administrations will not be shared without their prior approval. If the first case arises in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, the relevant nation's CMO will undertake the first public communications, with advance coordination across the four nations.

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Following discussions at COBRA, it has been agreed that the CMOs of the respective nations will be the owners and custodians of key clinical data. Such information will be requested and provided to the UK CMO on behalf of other CMOs. The data will be requested by the Department for Health and Social Care on a daily basis, by 12 noon, acting on behalf of the UK CMOs.

Health Protection Scotland (HPS) is co-ordinating activity across Scotland from NHS Boards and others, as well as providing advice and supporting contingency planning. Daily four nations Incident Management Team meetings are taking place between all four public health agencies, including HPS.

Health Protection Division is providing a co-ordinating role within the Scottish Government, including Resilience Division, should SGORR need to be activated. Officials are participating in daily four nations coordination calls.

There is only one testing centre for the Coronavirus in the UK, this is at Public Health England's laboratory in Colindale and has the capacity to undertake 100 tests per day. However, this will be expanded, and it is expected that testing will shortly be rolled out in Scotland. The location of these tests will initially be Edinburgh, with plans for Glasgow and Dundee to follow. An update from HPS is expected.

If a patient is tested as positive for Coronavirus, the course of treatment would be determined by clinicians. This could range from self-isolation at home to requiring treatment in an Airborne High Consequence Infectious Disease Treatment Centre in England.

The New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG) will convene on 28 January to consider and advise on severe case management and treatment options. Further information will flow as greater understanding of the science behind the viral behaviour and response to potential treatments is developed.

Guidance has been developed for healthcare workers and distributed by HPS through its networks. As a precautionary measure, and in line with national guidance on managing suspected cases, a number of facemasks will be released and distributed from national stockpiles.

A letter has been drafted for the CMO to issue in order to raise awareness of HPS guidelines.

Universities Scotland is in the process of distributing information to students and staff based on advice from HPS. Information posters have been drafted and discussions are underway on distribution.

It is understood that a flight will leave Madrid for China on 28 January to repatriate UK citizens.

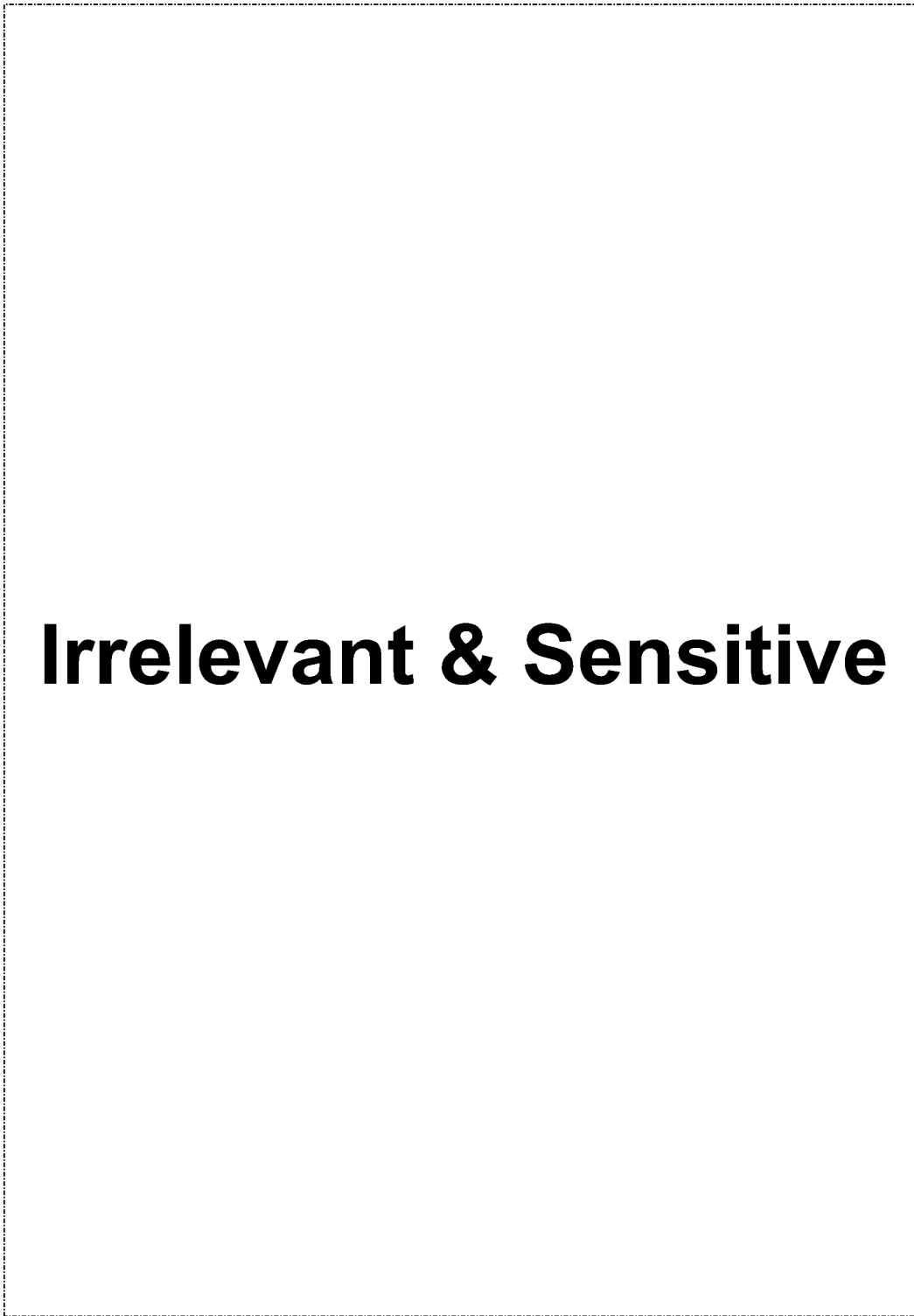
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Cabinet Secretariat
January 2020

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