

Northern Ireland Office

Covid 19

Situation Report **2**

New information in **RED**

Contact: **Covid-19@nio.gov.uk**

Information correct as of **1800** on **13** March 2020

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NIO00000209
INQ000083098_0001

Overview

UK Position (as of 12 March)

Case Numbers:

England	645
Wales	38
Scotland	86
Northern Ireland	29
TOTAL	798
Deaths	10

Republic of Ireland cases: 70

COBR (O) Update:

- Due to changes in testing we expect case numbers to drop for a few days and then spike. Don't be alarmed.
- It appears the next intervention to be recommended will be shielding of the vulnerable, rather than whole house isolation. SAGE were going to discuss this today.
- DCMS are looking at mass gatherings, will be considering as a three nations decision (now Scotland has taken a decision).

NI Update

Following the announcement by the Irish Government the FM and dFM have taken publicly different positions.

The FM said schools would need to close in the future. The dFM said schools needed to close now.

Belfast City Council are holding a special meeting at 6pm tonight on Covid-19. We will monitor any motions that get passed.

NICS are working with NIE Ministers to agree a common position ahead of tomorrow's meeting.

The FM, dFM, NI Health Minister, Tánaiste and Irish health Minister will meet tomorrow in Armagh to discuss the Coronavirus outbreak and the health response.

We are expecting a press conference to follow the meeting at 11.00 tomorrow.

The first 'community transmission' case of coronavirus have been confirmed in NI. Community transmission means a patient had no known contact with another confirmed case nor travelled from a country badly affected by the pandemic.

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Policy Challenges

Impact of Irish announcement - Cracks beginning to emerge in NIE, with SF wanting to follow Irish government particularly re school closures. NI and IG Health Ministers are due to meet on Saturday in Armagh. FM, dFM and Tánaiste are also expected to attend. The meeting is a North/South one but not officially badged as a NMSC. NICS working on a bridging statement based on the medical advice which may if accepted by FM/dFM may mean NI gives a more nuanced set of messages on school closures to the public.

Working with NIE and IG - TEO are proposing setting up a 'NI Hub' to manage impacts from Coronavirus, on a similar model to the Brexit C3 structures. Role for NIO to be determined and. A meeting took place with TEO today and progress has been made. TEO expect to issue a call for NICS volunteers early next week. They assume working on 7-7 shift pattern, 7 days a week. Full NIO scope/involvement to be agreed. Possible call for NIO volunteers early next week. Further meetings between NIO and TEO to follow.

Bill - DHSC have circulated a further draft of the Bill, Explanatory Note, Parliamentary Handling Strategy, Delegated Powers Note, Territorial Extent Note. With thanks to colleagues in Engagement, SPG and NIOLA documents were scrutinised and return comments provided. Further drafts incorporating comments are expected Monday. Timeline remains: submission to PBL early next week, introduction 19th March Royal. Lords 25th, Royal Assent 31st. DoH are making preparations for the bill to be debated in the Assembly on 24th.

Comms - The NIO Comms Team are plugged into the central comms hub, with twice-daily calls and regular email updates. There are also ad hoc cross-govt calls on specific issues, including today internal comms. The Coronavirus Hub have been working with press offices and SpAds across all Government departments to pull together an up-to-date master Q&A. Comms will monitor BCC meeting at 6pm tonight, as well as N/S meeting tomorrow.

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NIO

Resource	Critical Business
<p data-bbox="233 456 951 521">Successful test of the Everbridge system carried out. 13/3</p> <p data-bbox="233 565 884 634">All Staff briefing held to update on departmental planning. 13/3</p> <p data-bbox="233 675 968 708">Rhythm of internal meetings increased and formalised</p> <p data-bbox="233 748 1003 818">Small (<5) numbers of staff self isolating. All available for work</p>	<p data-bbox="1037 418 1906 488">Business Impact Assessment completed and will be shared with SofS 16/3 subject to PUS approval</p> <p data-bbox="1037 529 1801 599">Process to move staff into priority areas has begun, with retraining taking place</p>

Forward Look

- Assume there to be a COBR (M) on Monday 16 March (tbc).
- Meeting between the NI and RoI Ministers and Health Ministers on Saturday in Armagh.
- Special Belfast City Council Meeting 6pm on Fri 13 to discuss Covid-19.