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**From:** Sterling, David [/O=NIGOV/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=18F0B2409B1C4EEAA6ED1D5573DBDBEE-DAVID STERLING 001]  
**Sent:** 28/03/2020 10:31:40 AM  
**To:** Pearson, Karen [karen.pearson@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk]; Harbinson, Anthony [anthony.harbinson@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk]; Stewart, Chris (TEO) [chris.stewart@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk]  
**CC:** [REDACTED] NR [REDACTED]@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk; TEO HOCS (DS) [hocs@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk]  
**Subject:** Urgent - Thoughts on the week ahead  
**Attachments:** LIVE VERSION - Daily Covid Delivery Report.pdf; C-19\_ Planning Assumptions for Cumulative Impact Assessment Risk Matrix....pdf

Karen/Anthony/Chris

Looking ahead I think there are at least three priorities for the week ahead, all inter-linked:

1. Responding to last night's Irish Government (IG) announcement;
2. Developing a single Covid response strategy which the whole Executive can buy into; and
3. Adjusting our daily rhythm and working patterns as we tighten the lockdown.

### IG Position

The first of these is pressing as the split in the Executive which emerged on Friday will deepen unless we can find a way to reconcile the two positions. In a brief phone call just before the announcement Martin Fraser told me the IG would be working on guidance over the weekend and acknowledged that it was far from simple. Can I ask **Chris** to monitor this situation and contact Eamon Molloy as necessary to get the earliest possible steer on the actual detail of what they will be closing, particularly as it relates to construction, manufacturing and engineering. We should be ready to provide advice to ministers tomorrow before their return on Monday. And in all this we need to be wary of the IT shutdown tonight and tomorrow morning.

### Executive Covid Strategy

It was clear from the discussion at ECCMC on Friday morning that SF will not be satisfied until they have a comprehensive Executive Covid strategy which encompasses the DoH response. Up until now we have been distinguishing between the Health and non-Health response, perhaps as a consequence of our original civil contingencies approach.

I don't think this will wash any longer given Conor Murphy's very clear statement on the matter.

I said to FM and dFM on my short call with them on Friday evening that we would bring them a suggested model for an Executive strategy by tomorrow evening.

The Health response needs to be at the heart of this and I have asked Richard to ensure that DoH provides a comprehensive and compelling forward strategy for the next [three] months for consideration at the Executive on Monday morning. I've also said this needs to include a commitment to be more open and transparent in their reporting than they have been up to now. We shall see what emerges. If they come up with the goods it will be game-changing – if not we face a crisis.

Alongside what DoH bring forward, I think we need a short document which can quickly be adopted by the Executive as their "strategy" and plan. In the time available I suggest we create a document which would comprise the following elements:

A statement of planning assumptions. Those in the attached NIO document are quite good (though it pains me to say it).

A schedule which sets out a series of priority workstreams (see page 4 of the attached CO document). We could identify our priority workstreams from the latest version of the heat map and cluster them under the headings agreed previously by the Executive:

1. The health and well-being of our citizens
2. Economic well-being
3. Societal and community well-being
4. People and governance (I'd combine outcomes 4-6)

Ideally we should identify an owner for each workstreams at official and ministerial level. The CO have 47 workstreams of which 17 are identified as highest priority in their document – many of these (particularly on the health front) are the same issues which preoccupy our ministers. So I think we could lift many of these almost as drafted and apply our own RAG rating to them.

The document should be capable of being updated daily and include a small number of key metrics in graphical format.

Ministers clearly want to feel they are managing the crisis so we should identify real issues for them to focus on for example by including an Action Log containing items which have been escalated from CCG which require ministerial attention.

**Karen:** does this make sense and, if so, do you think it is doable over the next day or so? Would you need any resource? **Chris,** would Geoffrey's team be able to assist? I could even have a bash at this myself.

### **Daily Rhythm**

We really need to move quickly to home working, indeed I may ask the CMO to give us an instruction to that effect. We are not setting an example with the daily meetings in PB and I may need to say I would need a direction to continue putting staff at risk when they could work from home.

However dFM has said she will not leave PB until she is satisfied that the Executive is managing the crisis. Hence the importance of item 2 above.

Whatever, I think it is inevitable that we will be working remotely by the middle of the week at the latest which means we will need to ensure our technology works and that we have a daily flow of reports etc which allows the Executive to work remotely and satisfy themselves that they are managing as best they can.

Happy to discuss either individually or may be able to arrange a conference call (if I can find my CC number).

David