

Note of meeting with Jenny Pyper and First Minister and deputy First Minister

1 December 2020 at 10.30 via Zoom

Present: First Minister, deputy First Minister, Jenny Pyper, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade,

NR

NR

Covid Taskforce – as per FMdFM letter to Executive of 26.11.20 (and subsequent reply from Minister Swann)

Key points (FM)

- Silo mentality from DOH and others, more co-ordinated approach required.
- FM & dFM 'don't know what's happening'; are responsible for Civil Contingencies
- 'don't want to leave to chance
- Not the intention to take on the role of DOH; DOH Minister has said previously that he wants Executive to work together

Key points (dFM)

- We're left not knowing and left to front things
- Late papers; process is wrong; 'disrespectful to staff and other parties'
- Example of DOJ 'late issue' given [Note: Suggest this may be the Domestic Abuse Bill – has proved tricky]
- Time lag with change in legislation
- Need a more planned approach
- Anger from the public
- Ministers need reminding about consensus

Mass testing

- Not ambitious enough
- DOH resistance to mass testing
- Slovakia and Liverpool cited as examples
- Appears there is an emphasis on vaccine only
- NI behind the curve on contact tracing
- Willing partners already exist within local gov/community
- Cumulative impact with all these measures
- We want to minimise circuit-breakers
- Feeling that DOH has dismissed mass testing in favour of circuit-breakers

Resourcing

- 'staggering' that Karen P's team cannot be resourced from within the NICS

Vaccination programme

- DOH Minister defensive of GP programme
- Presentation to Executive on vaccine roll-out last week. 'we've got this' message

Logistics

- Need outside help
- Defence experts /large events expertise; it's about systems and process (HOCS)
- Judith Gillespie and George Hamilton suggested

Next steps

- Want clear sight-line on what to expect from DOH well in advance of Thursday's Executive meeting
- Names to HOCS on Taskforce membership [**Action: SPADS to bring forward**]
- Terms of reference – SpAds to bring forward draft. [**Action SpAds**]
- Late papers and process – HOCS to consider [Jenny]