

Shadow Social Partnership Council (SSPC) – 28 May 2020 – Microsoft Teams Meeting – (13:00-14:00pm)

Welcome and Introductions

First Minister

1. Following consensus at the previous meeting the SSPC will continue to meet fortnightly with an extended temporary membership to address Covid19.
2. Greater frequency of meetings will ensure agenda items raised by members will be covered in a timely way within the fortnightly cycle.

Agenda Item 1 - Covid19: Review of Lockdown Measures

First Minister

3. Confirmed a further announcement on lockdown provisions will be made tomorrow in line with the three week legal requirement.
4. Explained the rate of infection (r – rate) had not improved from the last review period and that the Welsh Government will be limited in what restrictions can be eased.
5. Emphasised that containing the spread of the virus within communities is crucial and that planning activity for re-opening local services such as re-cycling centres and libraries is progressing well.
6. Confirmed Debra Carter – Deputy Director, Local Government Strategic Finance is the Welsh Government's lead at official level.

Discussion

7. Trade Unions - supported the planning activity taking place for local services but referred to some instances where there was a lack of consultation by relevant local authorities.
8. Minister for Housing and Local Government – referred to one instance she was aware of but offered to discuss this with the trade unions outside of the SSPC and the WLGA asked to be part of those discussions.
9. Children's Commissioner for Wales - confirmed she will provide the results of a recent survey conducted with young people on the impact of Covid19 which might assist with plans to re-open schools and play facilities.

Action: Children's Commissioner for Wales to provide the results of a recent survey conducted with young people on the impact of Covid19 to the Social Partnership and Fair Work Directorate at SocialPartnership@gov.wales

Agenda Item 2 - Covid19: Update on Return to Work Guidance

Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales

10. Support for the core content of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's (BEIS) workplace guidance but it does not adequately reflect the legal position in Wales. Consultation was limited but has improved for remaining areas of guidance being developed by BEIS relating to pubs-

restaurants, non-essential retail, recreation-leisure, places of worship and aviation.

11. Draft of the Welsh Government's higher level work place guidance has been shared with the SSPC. This reflects Welsh law and is a reference point for all further guidance being developed. This is a live document which will continue to evolve over time based on scientific evidence and in consultation with social partners.
12. Welsh Government will also work with social partners to develop more tailored guidance in Wales over the coming weeks. SSPC has already provided input into the guidance for the manufacturing sector developed with Industry Wales. This is being progressed at pace as is guidance on construction, office working, home working and retail. This guidance will be released at the earliest opportunity to assist employers and employees and will be supported by a range of promotional activity.

Discussion

13. Welsh Government officials – have received feed-back from partners on both the over-arching work place and manufacturing guidance. Further guidance will be shared for consultation over the coming weeks and will be developed in line with the traffic light approach.
14. Head of Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales – welcomed the over-arching workplace guidance but felt greater emphasis should be given to equality law within the document so the needs of individuals with specific requirements are better addressed.
15. First Minister - thanked the Commissioner for raising this matter and identified it as the type of issue he wanted to see considered as the over-arching guidance is developed.
16. Trade Unions – welcomed the over-arching workplace guidance and confirmed they had contributed views on the document. They proposed that a National Health and Safety Forum be developed to better understand how to respond to Covid19. Referring to a similar body that had been established in Ireland, they offered to share good practice on this subject with the SSPC.
17. Trade Unions - outlined several other issues including what assurances there were that non-unionised employers are following official guidance, the need for a clear timetable on the sectoral guidance being developed, confusion over how guidance applies to vulnerable workers, uncertainty over how social distancing will be enforced, the need for clarity over when different businesses will return to work and assurances that employees medically suspended from work due to Covid19 will remain on full pay.
18. Private Sector Employers – emphasised the importance of promoting the safety of public transport in order for people to return to work. They also explained that as there is greater relaxation of restrictions in England this will disadvantage some businesses in Wales who will not be able to compete on equal terms.
19. Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales – confirmed trade union issues around risk assessment and vulnerable workers have been included in the over-arching work place guidance. The important role of public transport in allowing people to return to work was recognised but it was stressed that many people are concerned about leaving home at present and that home

working must still be encouraged as a means of curtailing the spread of Covid19. However, it was confirmed that access to public transport, albeit on a reduced basis, was being explored in recognition that some people would still need to use public transportation to get to work. The Minister explained that issues regarding pay for medically suspended employees cut across reserved powers and so was not within the remit of the Welsh Government. More detail was welcomed from the trade unions on proposals for a National Health and Safety Forum and the Minister emphasised the importance of understanding how such a body would work with Local Government in utilising its enforcement capabilities.

20. Devolved Employers – need to be aware that as lockdown eases there will be increased pressure on local authority services.

Action: Welsh Government officials to give further consideration to how greater emphasis can be given to equality law and the needs of vulnerable groups within the over – arching work place guidance.

Action: Wales TUC to provide further details to the Social Partnership and Fair Work Directorate at SocialPartnership@gov.wales on proposals for developing a National Health and Safety Forum.

Agenda Item 3 - Covid19: Test, Trace and Protect

Minister for Health and Social Services

21. Outlined the content of the briefing provided to the SSPC on the Covid19 test, trace and protect programme and confirmed contact tracing would start in Wales on the 1 June 2020.
22. Confirmed testing capacity currently stands at 9,277 per day in Wales and that specific testing in care homes has also increased significantly.
23. Working with Local Government had been extremely important in developing the tracing programme and would offer significant reassurance to the public until a vaccine can be made available.
24. Confirmed Jo-Anne Daniels – Director of Mental Health, Vulnerable Groups and NHS Governance is the Welsh Government's lead at official level.

Discussion

25. Devolved Employers – asked if the briefing on the Covid19 test, trace and protect programme can be shared outside of the SSPC.
26. The Minister for Health and Social Services - confirmed the briefing is for SSPC members only.
27. The Future Generations Commissioner - emphasised the importance of ensuring opportunities to promote and generate green initiatives are not missed as part of the Covid19 recovery phase.
28. Devolved Employers – agreed discussions with social partners on testing and tracing is progressing well and is at a more advanced stage than in England.
29. Trade Unions – emphasised the importance of having guidance in place for dealing with a workplace outbreak of Covid19, outlining how employees should be treated under such circumstances. They also called for greater clarity on pay support for employees during the Covid19 pandemic.

30. Devolved Employers – confirmed a group has been established which is considering some of these issues and the socio-economic challenges presented by Covid19.
31. Minister for Health and Social Services – contact tracing is the best way to move out of the lockdown measures but it will present challenges. Confirmed that the NHS contact tracing app developed in England does raise justifiable concerns over privacy but its trial has been useful and its applicability in Wales can be explored further. Confirmed a further update on progress can be presented to the next meeting of the SSPC and encouraged members in the meantime to write to the Welsh Government with any further issues they wished to raise regarding Covid19 recovery work.

Action: The Social Partnership and Fair Work Directorate to liaise with Welsh Government colleagues within the Health and Social Services Department to ensure a further briefing is provided on the Test, Trace and Protect programme at the next SSPC.

Action: SSPC members to present any further views on Covid19 recovery work to the Social Partnership and Fair Work Directorate at SocialPartnership@gov.wales

Actions Arising – Shadow Social Partnership Council (SSPC) – 28 May 2020

Agenda Item	Action	Owner
Agenda Item 1: Covid19: Review of Lockdown Measures	Children's Commissioner for Wales to provide the results of a recent survey conducted with young people on the impact of Covid19 to the Social Partnership and Fair Work Directorate at SocialPartnership@gov.wales	Children's Commissioner for Wales
Agenda Item 2: Covid19: Update on Return to Work Guidance	Welsh Government officials to give further consideration to how greater emphasis can be given to equality law and the needs of vulnerable groups within the over – arching work place guidance.	Welsh Government
	Wales TUC to provide further details to the Social Partnership and Fair Work Directorate at SocialPartnership@gov.wales on proposals for developing a National Health and Safety Forum.	Wales TUC
Agenda Item 3 - Covid19: Test, Trace and Protect	The Social Partnership and Fair Work Directorate to liaise with Welsh Government colleagues within the Health and Social Services Department to ensure a further briefing	Welsh Government

	is provided on the Test, Trace and Protect programme at the next SSPC.	
	SSPC members to present any further views on Covid19 recovery work to the Social Partnership and Fair Work Directorate at SocialPartnership@gov.wales	SSPC members

Attendance

Mark Drakeford MS - First Minister
 Ken Skates MS – Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales
 Vaughan Gething MS – Minister for Health and Social Services
 Julie James MS – Minister for Housing and Local Government
 Jeremy Miles MS – Counsel General
 Peter Hughes - Unite
 Shavanah Taj - Wales TUC
 Ruth Brady - GMB
 Mike Payne – GMB
 Helen Whyley – RCN
 David Evans - NEU
 Darren Williams – PCS
 Nick Ireland – USDAW
 Brendan Kelly - RMT
 Chris Llewelyn - WLGA
 Name Redacted - NHS
 Name Redacted - RCT County Borough Council
 Peter Kennedy - Welsh Government
 Clare Pillman – Natural Resources Wales
 Ben Cottam - FSB
 Ian Price – CBI
 Heather Myers - South Wales Chambers of Commerce
 Sir David Henshaw – Natural Resources Wales
 Ruth Marks – WCVA
 Louise Casella – Open University
 Sophie Howe - Future Generations Commissioner
 Aled Roberts – Welsh Language Commissioner
 Helena Herklots - Older People's Commissioner for Wales
 Sally Holland - Children's Commissioner for Wales
 Rev. Ruth Coombs - Head of Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales

Apologies:

Tanya Palmer - Unison

Officials in attendance

Name Redacted Welsh Government
 Jo Salway - Welsh Government
 Name Redacted – Welsh Government
 Dickie Davis – Welsh Government
 Name Redacted – Welsh Government

Observers:

Carys Evans - Welsh Government

Jane Runeckles - Welsh Government

Name Redacted - Welsh Government

Name Redacted - Welsh Government

Name Redacted - Welsh Government

Name Redacted - Welsh Government

Karen Higgins - WPC Joint Secretariat

Mark Lewis - WPC Joint Secretariat

Nisreen Mansour - Wales TUC

Joe Allen - Wales TUC