



Northern  
Ireland  
Office

## **C-19 CABINET SECRETARY OFFICIALS MEETING**

**Monday 11 May 2020**

17:00 - 18:00 | DIAL IN VIA ZOOM

### **AGENDA**

#### **1) PM Covid-19 Daily Dashboard**

*Katharine Hammond, Civil Contingencies Secretariat*

#### **2) Update on PM / FSS Deep Dives**

*Cabinet Secretary*

#### **3) Ministerial Implementation Groups Update**

*Simon Ridley / NR / Jonathan Black / David Quarrey*

##### **i) Strategy Update (including update on PM's Sunday Announcement)**

*Jonathan Black, Cabinet Secretariat*

##### **ii) Verbal Update on Safer Workplaces Guidance**

*Sam Beckett, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy*

#### **4) PMO Covid-19 Delivery Report**

*Colin Dingwall, Project Management Office, Cabinet Secretariat*

#### **5) Comms Update**

*Claire Pimm, Cabinet Office Communications*

#### **6) AOB**

*Cabinet Secretary*

## **LINES TO TAKE**

### **3i) Strategy Update (including update on PM's Sunday Announcement)**

#### **BACKGROUND**

We continue to monitor the NI Executive's approach to social distancing, following the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday and further detail of the 'roadmap' to be shared in Parliament and published today. It has been reported that the Executive hopes to publish their road map tomorrow (Tuesday). We expect this to pave the way towards a 'new normal', introducing a gradual and evidence-based relaxation of restrictions.

While Unionists want to remain aligned with the UKG approach, it is accepted that there will be a degree of variation/divergence, not least given the higher R rate (0.8-0.9) in Northern Ireland. The NIE has diverged from UKG already by retaining the message to 'stay home', rather than to 'stay alert'. It is possible there will be further divergence between NIE and UKG in the detail of roadmaps, and between the NIE and the Irish Government (because Northern Ireland is unlikely to have a date-based approach for relaxing measures, as Ireland has). The sharing of UKG thinking and draft guidance will be crucial to manage any risks associated with divergence.

#### **3ii) Verbal Update on Safer Workplaces Guidance**

- Businesses and employers must have as clear guidance as is possible, but we must also be respectful of the devolved competence of this guidance in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- Given the divergence between the UKG and DAs on the "Stay at home" and "Stay Alert" guidance, it is important that UKG departments continue to work with their counterparts in the DAs to ensure that there is no confusion of messaging of what is being published/broadcast in the devolved nations.
- Important for BEIS colleagues to keep in close contact with their policy counterparts in the DAs to keep them as informed as possible, and to invite their input.

#### **5) Communications**

- It is essential that UKG decides and defines how the new messaging is expected to run in the devolved administrations. The NI Executive has joined the other in asking that the UKG campaign does not run in NI.
- We have a particular problem with internal comms. In the immediate term we are saying that advice on working from home has not changed, but it seems likely we will need to manage different messaging in the Belfast and London

offices. This is not just an issue for the TOs - departments such as HMRC and many others have staff divided between England and the other nations.