

**CDL-FMs Weekly Call**  
**Wednesday 9th November 2020**  
**16:30 - 17:30**

**AGENDA**

1. **Approach to Intra-UK travel**
2. **Approach to January**

**STEER**

**Approach to Intra-UK Travel**

1. The focus for the first item will be the agreement of key principles to inform enforcement and communications surrounding intra-UK travel; with a proposed joint statement solidifying alignment. We consider that the principles are relatively inoffensive but the key issues which could prevent agreement are:
  - a. Wales and Scotland favour tougher wording on the prevention of travel from areas of high risk to areas of low risk. Both prefer a legislative approach. UKG and NIE (especially unionist parties) both favour a guidance based approach.
  - b. Ministerial decisions will be required on this from both UKG and DAs.

**Approach to January**

2. TEO officials shared concerns over the high cases in NI heading into eased Christmas restrictions, anticipating that measures will be needed in January to contain Covid-19, FM expressed concern over the R rate on this call last week.
3. The tone of FM/dFM will be instructive as TEO officials have emphasised the importance of the economy in the Executive's thinking, noting that the hope, especially within the DUP, is to maintain eased restrictions throughout December, traditionally a profitable time for non-essential retail and hospitality, before potential restrictions in the less busy months of January and February.
4. Jennie Pyper, the new interim HOCS, will consider contingencies for a rapid spread during December, alongside winter pressures on the NHS. Insight into this, and the position of the Executive on tightening December restrictions would be useful.
5. The current regulations do not have a set end date, they will continue until Robin Swann brings a proposal to the Executive for measures to be eased or tightened, There may therefore be a pressure point for the Executive just after Christmas.

**LINES TO TAKE (if required)**

- *I am keen to continue our close working with the NI Executive to ensure consistent messaging on X-UK travel over the festive period. We will also continue to work with the Irish Government to discuss messaging on the island of Ireland. I understand that this was discussed at yesterday's trilat.*
- *[If raised] I would be interested to hear more about the contingencies being considered by the Covid Taskforce headed up by Jennie Pyper, and how these might affect restrictions over December, would it be helpful to discuss this at our next quad meeting?*
- *[If not covered] What is the Executive's current thinking on restrictions in January?*

## BACKGROUND

### *Intra-UK Travel - Principles to be agreed*

- Individuals should not travel into or out of areas where there are restrictions or guidance advising against travel, other than where necessary such as work, education or medical need.
- Individuals should not travel to other areas within the UK in order to circumvent local restrictions. These restrictions have been introduced for good reason, to prevent the spread of the virus.
- Individuals should know the rules before they travel - and follow the rules both where they live and where they are going, with clear signposting from each administration.
- While travelling, individuals should adhere to the safer travel guidance of the area that they are travelling from and where they are travelling too, on social distancing and car sharing, including complying with the law on the wearing of face coverings. Even if an exemption applies, people must not travel if they have symptoms of coronavirus, live in the same household as someone who has symptoms, or are required to self-isolate.
- The UK government and the devolved administrations will continue to work together to ensure that communications to citizens on travel within the UK are clear and coherent.

### *CDL will seek agreement on proposals to:*

- Deliver a UK-wide public communications campaign to ensure consistent messaging on X-UK travel, supported by a joint statement.
  - Support greater compliance and - where necessary - ensure police are able to enforce these restrictions in all parts of the UK by end of November.
6. Any statement which could limit travel from GB-NI will be sensitive for the Executive and will cause concern for UKG on an economic basis. Similar statements on travel have not succeeded in the past as the more interventionist approach of Wales and Scotland have contrasted with the wording proposed by UKG. Currently, NIE do not advise against travel to elsewhere in the UK and we anticipate this will remain the case. Scotland have recently legislated to reduce travel from England, Wales and NI. Travel to Wales is prohibited from NI, as well as from high alert levels in England and Scotland.
7. Alignment will be important for comms over the Christmas period and it will be useful to support this, but also to emphasise the work done by NIO, NIE and the Irish Government to ensure a coherent message on the island of Ireland.