

From the Office of the Minister
Diane Dodds MLA



**From: Diane Dodds MLA
Minister for the Economy**

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Date: 5 June 2020

**To: Arlene Foster MLA Michelle O'Neill MLA
First Minister deputy First Minister**

**EXECUTIVE PAPER: MEMORANDUM E (20) 98 (C): UK GOVERNMENT PLANS
TO BRING IN REQUIREMENTS TO MAKE DECLARATIONS AND TO SELF-
ISOLATE ON ARRIVAL IN THE UK**

Thank you for your Executive paper of 14 May 2020 regarding the above.

I note and agree to the recommendations in the paper but also wish to highlight the potential economic impacts arising which are as follows:

- Loss of new foreign direct investment – Invest NI is currently implementing virtual programmes for senior executives/decision makers. Prior to making a decision, they have to visit NI. It is not expected that such visits will be made in the future, if there is a requirement to quarantine for 14 days. Ultimately, this will have a serious adverse impact on FDI visits and decisions to invest in Northern Ireland.
- Loss of export opportunities - linked to the above, NI exporters may be similarly disinclined to travel overseas for business development if they have to self-isolate for 14 days on their return. Also, the loss of inward buyer visits and more obviously visits by overseas officials and delegations.
- Loss of existing foreign direct investment - there is a risk that NI loses out in the process of re-shoring activity by major economies e.g. USA. If senior corporate executives feel that they are not able to visit NI operating sites, it will be a potential reason for them to disregard such sites if global rationalisation is being implemented and choices between international sites are being made.

In relation to telecoms:

- The draft list of exemptions to the requirement to self-isolate, which were provided at Annex A, do not appear to provide cover for the telecoms sector.
- Telecoms policy is reserved and led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

- DCMS has advised DfE that Telecoms will be included and has provided an agreed legal definition that points to the Electronics Communications Network reference: Communications Act 2003, giving an exemption for essential telecommunications work. I would ask that you seek confirmation from the UK Government that this is the case in the final version of the Annex A.

In relation to Tourism, I appreciate that this first and foremost a health issue. However it is important to note that air and sea access is essential for Northern Ireland tourism, and GB is a key market. I would welcome clarification that the restrictions outlined will only apply to visitors arriving in NI from international destinations, and not those arriving from GB.

I am copying this to the Attorney General, Departmental Solicitor's Office, First Legislative Counsel and to Executive Secretariat.
Yours sincerely

DIANE DODDS MLA
Minister for the Economy