

NR

**Head of Civil Contingencies Policy Branch**

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**FROM:**

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**Head of Civil Contingencies Policy Branch**

**DATE:**

**30 January 2020**

**TO:**

- 1. Chris Stewart**
- 2. Head Of The Civil Service**

**SUBJECT:**

**To advise you of the process for activation of the Northern Ireland Central Crisis Management Arrangements (NICCMA)**

**Issue:**

Activation of the Northern Ireland Central Crisis Management Arrangements (NICCMA) should the current Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) be declared a global pandemic.

**Timescale:**

IMMEDIATE.

**Press Office Advice:**

No presentational issues with the activation of NICCMA in itself, but significant presentational challenges for the duration of the arrangements.

**FOI Implications:**

Fully Disclosable.

**Financial Implications:**

None.

**Legislative Implications:**

None.

**Executive Referral:**

Not required at present.

**Recommendation:** That you note that the process for activation of the Civil Contingencies Group (CCG) protocol - Northern Ireland Central Crisis Management Arrangements (NICCMA) is normally by request, and is not generally initiated by CCPB (NI).

## Background

1. This paper sets out the process for actions guided by activation of the NICCMA, should the Coronavirus be declared a global pandemic. Activation of NICCMA can be requested by a number of sources.

## Detail

2. The following may request activation of NICCMA:
  - The First Minister and deputy First Minister or TEO HOCS/CCPB (NI);
  - A Minister or the Executive;
  - the Lead Government Department (through the Minister);
  - a senior representative from the NIO Briefing Room (NIOBR);
  - a senior member of PSNI involved in the Police led multi-agency GOLD group; the local level co-ordinator; or
  - in the absence of any such requests, whenever senior officials from TEO judge it appropriate to do so.
3. In the current circumstances, Department of Health (DoH), as the Lead Government Department, with responsibility for managing the Coronavirus situation, have already set up their Gold Operations Room and are monitoring the situation very closely.
4. The World Health Organisation (WHO) provides assessments of the overall situation. It is anticipated that WHO may declare Coronavirus as a pandemic. If this is the case, DoH is responsible for assessing and judging the situation and would request that NICCMA is activated when they deem the situation to be a Strategic Level Emergency.
5. The NICCMA protocol is supported by the Pandemic Influenza Health and Non – Health Guidance and Protocol. This is well established and designed to assist those involved in any pandemic response.
6. Should DOH judge it appropriate to activate NICCMA, the Health Minister will submit a request to FM and dFM to activate NICCMA protocol. CCPB TEO would then mobilise Civil Contingencies Group CCG (NI) and schedule a

meeting. A formal notification is issued to relevant Ministers, HOCS and all CCG (NI) members.

7. In response to the severity of the situation, the size and scale of the Operations Room / NI Hub will be determined in order to manage the situation at a strategic level.
8. DoH, as the Lead Government Department, is the appropriate source of subject matter expertise, knowledge and professional advice. DoH is therefore best placed to inform and advise the First Minister and deputy First Minister and Executive colleagues on evolving situations and provide advice, including communications and lines to take.
9. [You may wish to note, this has not been accepted in the ongoing coronavirus situation as DoH are of the view that TEO should be briefing FM and dFM. This is a matter of immediate concern.]

**Recommendation**

10. That you note the process for activation of the Civil Contingencies Group (CCG) Protocol.

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**Procedure to activate NICCMA.**

