

## Message

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**From:** McFlynn, Sharon [/O=NIGOV/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=1479773]  
**Sent:** 08/03/2020 21:09:10  
**To:** Doherty, Brian [brian.doherty@daera-ni.gov.uk]; McGrade, Sean [sean.mcgrade@daera-ni.gov.uk]  
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**Subject:** OFFICIAL SENSITIVE -Read out of Covid-19 C3 leads workshop, Friday 06 March

Brian, Sean,

A workshop involving C3 leads was held in Castle Buildings on Friday 06 March to provide Departments and key stakeholders an opportunity to identify the key priorities for Covid - 19 readiness. A short readout is set out below. Formal note expected to follow.

### Top priorities identified:

1. Resources- Staffing and Business Continuity and finance to cover overtime.
2. Health Sector Capacity - Health Dept reported that they will be asking other government departments to help out.
3. Communications- Need for consistent communication and messaging around what to do (and what not to do). PHA website remains the first point of reference for information for the public and employers. This was reinforced in the NICS HR note issued to staff on 05/03 which also includes specific advice for NICS staff.
4. Ministerial Direction- unlike the situation vis-à-vis No Deal Planning for Brexit, the Executive now has a role to play in leading and directing the NI response to Cov-19.
5. Need for C3 to be formally stood up- linked to Nos 3 & 4 above. Concern was expressed that at present, in the absence of C3 structures being formally stood up, multiple points of contact in Depts are being used by TEO and stakeholders, which is causing a lot of duplication of information and effort and increasing the risk of misinformation and confused messaging.
6. Supply Chains- a number of departments raised the emerging impact of Covid-19 on supply chains.

These priorities will be highlighted in a TEO report to HOCS.

### Issues for DAERA:

The workshop highlighted a number of issues to be considered/addressed by DAERA:

### Reporting:

- HOCS has requested briefing for Executive meetings- an information gathering exercise has been commissioned with responses due by noon, Monday 09 March. [CMB has circulated the request to all co-ordinators in DAERA for input].
- C3- TEO reported that C3 '*will be stood up sooner rather than later*'. Some departments have already set up C3 in shadow form (DfE, DE, DfC) to deal with increasing requests for information. In the past week TEO has issued three requests for information to facilitate the development of an overall picture of NI readiness. It is anticipated that the frequency of COBRA meetings will intensify this week (perhaps to 5/6 days per week). These will be a combination of COBRA (O) and COBRA (M) and as a result a further increase in demand for information from all departments can also be expected.  
DAERA needs to be in a state of readiness for when C3 is stood up, therefore consideration should be given to standing up in shadow mode as soon as possible.

**Readiness:** Reps attending the meeting reported that their department/organisation had/were in the processing of reviewing BCPs. You will be aware that DAERA recently completed such an exercise. However, given what is already known about Covid-19 and the potential that exists for it to cause widespread disruption to the workforce, a review of each BCP in isolation may not be the best indication of readiness across the department. The government has set out a Reasonable Worst Case Scenario (RWCS) in which 20% of the workforce could be off at any one time, therefore a further review of BCPs against the RWCS will be commissioned this week. While this should provide a more accurate picture of readiness within each business area in such a scenario, it will not address the issue of prioritisation of work across the department should it come to pass. In such a situation work may need to be prioritised and resources diverted to areas of greatest risk within/outside of the department. This would require a more holistic assessment and understanding of readiness across the department, needs to be directed by senior management and may require Ministerial approval, in my opinion. Therefore I would suggest there is a need to revisit the work undertaken to assess preparedness and key objectives agreed in the event of a 'No-Deal' Brexit, some of which could be repurposed for Covid-19. This situation is not unique to DAERA and to assist departments in this exercise (both for themselves and to assess stakeholder readiness) TEO has devised a template using a Corona pneumonia which they recommend departments should use to help establish a common picture across all departments.

**Assessment of current situation:**

**C-**Current issues (arising as a result of Covid-19)

**O-** Outputs and Risk

**R-** Resourcing issues/needs

**Going forward (future)**

**O-** Operational Priorities

**N-**National context (what are counterparts in other jurisdictions doing in response)

**A** -Anticipated issues

This template could also be used more widely to help stakeholders assess their readiness and think ahead to the steps they can take to minimise disruption/ensure business continuity.

I trust you will find this note helpful. I will be at the engagement session in the morning (possibly via VC) but will be available on the mobile beforehand if you require any further information/clarification.

Regards,

Sharon

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