

## MEETING NOTE

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>TITLE/ORGANISATION:</b>  |   | Ministers meeting with CMO & CSA to discuss Omicron |   |
| <b>VENUE:</b>   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoom  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:          | N/A   |
| <b>LIST OF ATTENDEES:</b>   |   |   |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minister  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spad  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PS              |   |
| <b>ATTENDEES:</b>   | First Minister Paul Girvan<br>Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill<br>Minister of Health Robin Swann<br>Junior Minister Declan Kearney<br>Donal Moran<br>Mark Ovens<br>Prof Ian Young<br>Jayne Brady<br><div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Name Redacted</div><br>Richard Bullick<br><div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Name Redacted</div><br>Deirdre Griffith |   | <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Name Redacted</div><br><div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Name Redacted</div><br>Peter Luney<br>Jane Holmes<br><div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Name Redacted</div><br>Karen Pearson<br>Michael McBride<br><div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Name Redacted</div><br><div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Name Redacted</div><br>Dara O'Hagan<br>Philip Weir |
| <b>Introduction</b><br><p>Update on Omicron variant and existing measures currently in place.</p> <p>Group was informed England is moving to Plan B including messaging on Working from Home (WFH)</p> <p>Update on current position here - 3 Confirmed cases of Omicron here. A week to a week and half behind Wales. Numbers within hospital have now plateaued and no longer decreasing this is a concern.</p> <p>FM – updated on the call with SOS and that 3 nations have called for a Cobra meeting to include discussion on measures in place and what if any financial support from Treasury would be available should the need come.</p> |   |   |   |

It was noted that Data around hospitalisation from this variant still not available but it was noted that any additional increase in numbers is a real cause of concern.

Agreement that the Roll out of Booster and messaging needs pushed – lack of adherence of facemask wearing.

Concern that measures will not impact on rise of cases what more can be done now? Other measures will require financial input.

dFM comments Time intervention – is what we are doing enough? Do we need to do more. Is there low cost interventions that we could be doing now? Lack of money to intervene on bigger measures. Care homes and ramping up Booster programme

CMO – dominate variant remains Delta. This various appears more transmissible and is concerned how it will impact on hospitals. Displace Delta not likely to New Year. If there was full adherence and enforcement there is enough. This will move quickly. Executive will need to make decisions to prevent Hospital admissions. Will continue to keep a close eye on data and evidence and provide this to Executive.

CSA – Hospitals are under significant pressure – change in a matter of a few weeks far side of Christmas. Hospital admissions could quadruple. Intervention would be required at an early stage. Maximum benefit doubling down with measures. Face coverings adherence is not high enough. Anything else will have an economic cost.

CMO – Covid Certification is important. Recognise there is limited opportunity to put interventions to prevent rise in cases.

Concern about impact on staff absences across all sections.

FM – mentioned FM Scotland testing before heading out. Is this something we could push here. LFD testing before going to events meeting friends. Range of scenario plans to be developed - what interventions would be necessary – elective care having to go down for Nightgale to be scaled up. Asking officials to start the work now. Informed by other 4 nations actions which could feed into financial need and asks.

Minister of Health – support the LFD messaging. Biggest ask is if anyone gets a positive test to observe it. Only a 5% reporting result of LFD. WFH messaging could be strengthened. Fewer people are working from home here than the UK average. Masks and face coverings adherence and enforcement is problematic. Not seeing local interaction, compliancy is part of the problem. Keeping the voluntary social distancing.

dFM – Understand the need not to panic but need to get ahead. Ask everybody that can work from home from now to Christmas to do so. Asking individuals to take LFD before heading out. Strengthening the Messaging. How do we move adherence and enforcement up a level. Need to have an Executive meeting to update all Ministers.

FM – agreed to hold an Executive meeting.

Details on current isolation of close contacts if in contact with Delta variant difference if close contact to someone who has Omicron variant was discussed.

CMO - Omicron will become dominate variant.

dFM – visiting booster programme in morning opportunity to push messaging.

FM not supportive of returning to same WFH messaging from 18 months ago. Need for well thought out messaging. Need to be coherent in our approach.

Role of ECT was discussed and need for them to bring proposals to Executive for Executive to make decision.

FM need to move forward in a structured way. Adherence and enforcement is enough to push ahead at the moment. Need to get information on Financial packages from England. Ramp up the Booster and encourage people to get booster.

Agreement with Executive Meeting tomorrow. Update Ministers on meetings held today. Engagement on modelling and scenarios. Engaging with Treasury role for Minister of Finance. Closer cooperation with Ireland. Encouragement of LFD on a wider perspective.

FM - EIS to work up more messaging.

Junior Minister Kearney – ECT brings together relevant Perm Secs. Robust proposals for adherence and enforcement. Executive will receive these proposals. Take the measures now to increase adherence. Have the conversations with Police and Solace. Outreach to all 4 administrations to hold a meeting coordinate measures. TEO to invite

FM - Executive meeting to be held at 1pm tomorrow.

EIS lines to be shared with Minister Swann. Doubling down effort.

HOCS – lines in advance have been prepared and will be shared after updating. ECT meeting with London Dublin and Officials will say Ministers want meeting.

KP – Civil Contingencies are convey meeting tomorrow protecting public services as much as we can. C3 leads meeting. For internal use only.

PL – shared draft UKG WFH lines and will circulate the cleared lines as soon as possible.

**ACTION POINTS / OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE:**

| Action point                                       | Responsibility        |
|--|-----------------------|
| Development of scenario plans with ECT team.       | HOCS and ECT Team     |
| Executive Meeting to be set up for tomorrow at 1pm | Executive Secretariat |
| Lines to take updated and shared                   | EIS                   |
| Roll out of messaging                              | ECT and EIS           |

**NOTE WRITTEN BY:**

**DATE: 8 December 2021**

**Name Redacted**