

**Civil Contingency Group (COVID-19 Response) Meeting  
Tuesday 24 March 2020  
Block B Level 5 Conference Room Castle Buildings**

**Attendees**

David Sterling (Chair)  
Andrew McCormick - TEO  
Anthony Harbinson - TEO  
Chris Stewart – TEO  
Katrina Godfrey DfI  
Richard Pengelly – DoH  
Mike Brennan DfE  
Dennis McMahon DAERA  
Peter May DOJ  
Sue Gray - DOF  
Jill Minne – NICSHR  
Derek Baker DE  
Karen Pearson – TEO  
Tracy Meharg- DfC  
Mark Hamilton - PSNI  
Alan Walmsley NIFRS  
Michael Bloomfield - NIAS  
Stephen Reid – Local Government  
Maria Jennings – Food Standards Agency  
Mark Larmour – NIO  
Chris McNabb – EIS  
Hugh Widdis – DSO  
Bernie Rooney – TEO  
Name Redacted NI Hub  
Andy Cole – NI Hub

**Note of Meeting**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- David Sterling opened the meeting and underscored the purpose of the meeting: to co-ordinate the strategic, non-health response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**2. COVID-19 - Current Situation and Prognosis**

- Richard Pengelly gave a brief update on the current situation including testing and PPE issues. Four Nations meeting at 11:30.
- Guidance for undertakers to issue today.

**3. Actions Review**

**Personal Protection Equipment**

**Action DOF: To progress the provision of PPE equipment urgently.**

- Sue Gray gave an update on this issue.
- PSNI still have a shortage of PPE.

- Peter May raised the issue of prioritisation for testing which should be considered in advance of the tests being available to smooth its implementation.
- DoF to develop system for prioritisation for issue to non-health personnel.
- DoF working on this issue and will liaise with PSNI and Anthony Harbison.

#### **Local Government Refuse Drivers**

**Action Dfl: Katrina Godfrey to pick up on issue of drivers with Local Government.**

- Katrina Godfrey gave an update on this action.
- Need to decide on the advice on health and safety as a matter of urgency.
- Share list of driver call offs with local government and liaise on redeployment.

#### **4. Legislation Overview**

- Chris Stewart advised that the Bill was proceeding rapidly through Westminster.
- LCM to be debated in the Assembly today.
- Executive to consider this morning the outcome of yesterday's COBRA meeting and the PM's announcement.

**Action TEO: Chris Stewart to speak to PSNI, Local Government and NIO around enforcement powers.**

#### **5. Member Updates**

##### **PSNI**

- No issues requiring escalation to CCG.

##### **NIAS**

- No issues requiring escalation to CCG.

##### **NIFRS**

- No issues requiring escalation to CCG.

##### **FSA**

- No issues requiring escalation to CCG.

##### **Local Government**

- Keen to liaise with DoH on guidance around the testing programme and how key workers will be able to access testing.

**Action DoH: To provide advice on how the testing programme will be implemented.**

- Would want to discuss how to coordinate on offers of help and redeployment.

**Action TEO: Anthony Harbison to discuss with Local Government how best to coordinate offers of help.**

##### **DAERA**

- No issues requiring escalation to CCG.

**DE**

- Only 350 pupils showed up yesterday, with many more teachers available, over 2 per pupil. 200 sites with no pupils.
- These will be rationalised from today, to take into account the other teachers now self-isolating.
- Would be interested in seeing figures on how these efforts are impacting on the resilience of key workers.

**DfE**

- Working with some NI companies that are putting together testing kits for RoW – to see if these can be redirected to internal use. Must be certified that the tests are fit for purpose.

**Action DfE: DfE to liaise with DoH on the local producers of testing kits.**

**DfI**

- No issues requiring escalation to CCG.

**DoF**

- Will be liaising with DfE on the implementation of the small business grants scheme to ensure smooth workings of the scheme.
- Will be issuing guidance on payment of money to government suppliers to help ensure this keeps flowing during the current period.

**DoJ**

- Peter May said that Prison Staffing numbers are beginning to drop and will be monitored closely. He said testing will help once available.
- Peter also raised concerns about the preparations around a temporary mortuary, especially if construction companies may be ceasing activities.

**DfC**

- Tracey Meharg said that they have seen a very large increase in workload, with 10,000 claims coming in last week.
- They are redeploying staff across the department but have run into significant issues around the shortages of appropriate IT kit. May be worth considering redeployment of kit from other departments.

**Action DoF: DoF to liaise with DfC on the supply of appropriate IT kit**

**NI Hub**

- Anthony Harbison said that the NI Hub will be issuing a simplified Sitrep from today to ease the burden on departments and to ensure that only the most necessary information is required.

**6. Communications Strategy**

- Chris McNabb said that the campaign was to be signed off today.
- EIS had been in contact with both PSNI and Local Government.

**7. AOB and Date of next Meeting**

**Date of next meeting**

- 08:30, 25 March 2020, Block B Conference Room, Castle Buildings