

Meeting considering recommendations from the Task and Finish Group on Funerals, Weddings, and general numbers who can gather in public. 26/6/20

DfM

-opened by providing background on the Task and Finish objectives and ensured all attendees had the email note describing progress.

-noted that the email note did not take account of sports and asked if this would be issued separately? Whilst acknowledging that this is a DfC responsibility, still expected some level of discussion.

-recognised broad views around the Executive and the Scientific advice i.e. more people = greater risk. Therefore, decisions around relaxations of this sort are policy decisions.

Minister of Health

-recognised that discussions are still in the abstract and had assumed the T&F group would have provided more detailed recommendations.

-recognised some very big decisions are being taken with limited scientific evidence – more consideration should be given to iterative steps.

Declan Kearney

- There is a specific conflict between advice re the numbers of people permitted inside a church (for a service) and outside a church (e.g. for a burial) – these need to be ironed out.
- If we lift the numbers of people permitted from 10 to 30+, does this not encourage self regulation?
- Outdoor contact training has not been adequately addressed in the email note. 10 people training outside isn't even half of a panel for many teams and is, therefore, useless.

FM

-The note recommended a “breather” until Thursday to consider the evidence in greater detail and I would agree.

Would like to announce 30 people on Monday (as this is already in the plan) and consider the rest of the detail for Thursday.

Gordon Lyons

-Would recommend quicker decision making re the contradictions.

-Baptisms have not been covered.

Minister of Health

-Agree with FM's proposed approach.

-Acknowledging the tight timescales, would have expected more from the T&F Group.

Michael

-Greater numbers = greater risk

-Behaviours at weddings/funerals are different to more standard church services and present greater challenges re social distancing.

Ian Young

-The science proves outdoors are safer than indoors and greater distance is safer. Large groups are less ordered and, therefore, more difficult to manage distance. Larger crowds also bring transport issues and enhanced need for public services (toilets).

-The summer “bands” bringing crowds is also a risk which needs to be addressed (albeit acknowledging sensitivities).

-The graduated approach has a lot to be said for it but there is little difference in risk between 30 and 50 when compared to risks with 100+.

DfM

- So can we push for 70? Is there a difference between 50-70?
- Would prefer much greater numbers (but not unlimited).

M Health

- Well there'll be a difference between 30-70!

DfM

-30 was arbitrary..

Ian Young

-Greater numbers = greater risk

-Community transmission is very low but multiple relaxations so quickly make it difficult to calculate increased risk. We are managing a very fine balance.

FM

-Plan to announce 30 on Monday and allow Karen Pearson until Thursday to provide more information.

-Can discuss over the weekend and Monday morning if necessary.

ALL AGREED

Declan Kearney

-Specifically, we need to address:

- Numbers for outdoor contact sports training
- A degree of regulated consistency
- Numbers for weddings and funerals

Each number needs to have a scientific basis.