

JUNIOR MINISTER'S OFFICE MEETING NOTE

Date 21 October 2020

TITLE/ORGANISATION:		TEO	
PURPOSE:		STRATEGIC ENFORCEMENT/COMPLIANCE GROUP	
DATE:	21/10/20	NOTE WRITTEN BY:	NR
Venue – Online - Zoom		Chaired by Minister Lyons and Minister Kearney	
LIST OF ATTENDEES: Junior Ministers, CMO, CSA, Alan Todd, PSNI, Julie Harrison, DoJ, NR , SOLACE, Anthony Carleton, DfC, NR , NR , DfE, Chris McNabb, TEC NR (note taker)			
<p>Key Points</p> <p>Following welcome to attendees, Minister Lyons explained that it was hoped the group could meet on a regular basis.</p> <p>Updates</p> <p>Minister Lyons invited attendees to provide updates.</p> <p>CSA – advised that while the number of cases had increased the infection rate had slowed. He emphasised that the next 4 weeks were critical, and similar to Derry/Strabane, there was potential for the situation to improve if individuals were compliant. He added that enforcement was an important part in setting the scene for the lead into the Christmas period. In response to a question from Alan Todd, PSNI, regarding where their key priorities should be in terms of geographical areas, CSA explained that currently Belfast had the largest number of cases.</p> <p>NR SOLACE provided an overview of the engagement that existed at local government level with the PSNI Commanders. She detailed some of the work that had been undertaken in the Antrim/Newtownabbey area over the weekend. She advised that engagement with retailers had been positive and was encouraging in terms of creating a culture of compliance.</p> <p>Anthony Carleton provided detail on the designation issue that was raised by NR. He explained that the first designation had been put in place in May, however, it since required changes. He added however, that it was hoped these would be in place either on Thursday or Friday. The designation provides the regulatory powers needed by Councils. Minister Kearney said it would be helpful to get a sense of what other Councils were doing in relation to promoting a culture of compliance.</p>			

Action – NR to share her template/approach in relation to activity in town centres etc. with other SOLACE colleagues and to provide an update from other Council areas at the next meeting.

Julie Harrison, DoJ, highlighted the importance of effective communication. She added that positive behavioural change was of importance as well as enforcement. She advised the group that urgent legal advice was being sought on powers to enter premises.

Following a point raised by Minister Kearney there was discussion regarding the timing of the laying of the regulations and having the appropriate documentation available for use. Minister Kearney advised that this gave cause for concern and needed to be resolved urgently.

Alan Todd explained that efforts had been made to try to expedite the matter and printing of the fixed penalty notices was underway.

Action: Julie Harrison to hold further discussion with Alan Todd on this matter.

Alan Todd, PSNI explained that enforcement largely focussed on house parties, licensed premises and quarantine issues and that house parties equated to 90% of the fines issued. He advised that there was an increase in enforcement at weekends. He also advised that there may be a need to strategically consider the handling, of those instances, where individuals have tested positive but do not self-isolate.

Minister Lyons put on record his thanks to the PSNI for their handling of matters last weekend.

Regulations

No issues or points of clarification were raised.

Communication

Minister Lyons highlighted the need for ongoing engagement and said a read-out from the meeting with the retail sector, scheduled for 22 October, would be provided at next week's SEG meeting.

Chris McNabb, TEO provided an overview on communications to date and the winter campaign. He explained that a testimonial campaign would be rolled out week commencing 2 November, with a more "heavy weight" campaign following week commencing 9 November. He advised the Group, that he had met with local government communication representatives earlier in the week. Chris McNabb agreed to share communication activities/actions to date with others.

Minister Kearney reiterated the need to double down on efforts and consider what more could be done to strengthen communications over the next three weeks.

There was discussion amongst attendees about actively “jolting” public awareness at the 2 week juncture. It was agreed that Chris McNabb should attend the meeting with the retail sector scheduled for 22 October.

NR

highlighted that there was significant compliance across the retail sector, increased communication and social distancing had improved.

Minister Kearney said it was necessary to reengage with Karen Pearson to consider how best an operational strand, of the Group, could be taken forward.

Action: Chris McNabb agreed to share communication activities/actions to date with others.

Action: Chris McNabb to attend meeting with retail sector on 22 October.

Action: Read-out from retail meeting planned for 22 October to be provided at next Compliance Group meeting.

Action: Karen Pearson to note – operational aspect.

Next Meeting

It was proposed that the Group should meet at 3.30pm each Wednesday to help establish a regular reporting rhythm.

Minister Lyons and Minister Kearney thanked attendees for their participation.

ACTION POINTS:	As above.
-----------------------	------------------

NR