

**OFFICIAL SENSITIVE**

**Civil Contingency Group (COVID-19 Response) Meeting  
Monday 27 April 2020  
Block B, Level 5 Conference Room, Castle Buildings**

**Note of Meeting**

**Attendees**

David Sterling (Chair)  
Arlene Foster - FM  
Michelle O'Neill - dFM  
Declan Kearney - JM  
Gordon Lyons – JM  
Derek Baker – DE  
Michael Bloomfield – NIAS  
Mike Brennan – DfE  
Katrina Godfrey – DfI  
Sue Gray – DOF  
CC: **I&S** - PSNI  
ACC Alan Todd – PSNI  
Lesley Hogg – NI Assembly  
**NR** FSA  
Mark Larmour – NIO  
Peter May – DoJ  
David Jackson – LG  
Joan McCaffrey – LG  
Chris McNabb – EIS  
David Small – DAERA  
Colum Boyle – DfC  
Jill Minto – NIOS HR  
**NR** NIFRS  
Richard Pengelly – DoH  
Karen Pearson – TEO  
Chris Stewart – TEO  
Hugh Widdis – DSO  
**NR** TEO  
Andrew McCormick – TEO  
Anthony Harbinson – TEO  
Donal Moran – NI Hub  
Andy Cole – NI Hub  
Secretariat – NI Hub

## 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

## 2. COVID-19 - CURRENT SITUATION AND PROGNOSIS

Richard Pengelly (DoH) updated the meeting:

- To date there have been 3,038 confirmed cases in NI and 299 deaths in hospitals;
- An additional £6.5m had been provided to support the care home sector;
- There appeared to be a significant increase in the volume of traffic on the roads. This could be indicative of reduced adherence to requirements for social distancing and staying at home;
- Katrina Godfrey (DfI) confirmed that Friday had seen the biggest single daily increase in traffic volume since the beginning of lockdown. She advised that Saturday's traffic was still down overall by 64% but the volume was up 12.5% since last Saturday and 18% from Easter Saturday;
- Alan Todd (PSNI) advised that he had raised this issue last week as this was now the 4<sup>th</sup> week of increases. He suggested there would be value in examining the available data to identify evidence that could form the basis for communication, enforcement and policy responses;
- Chris McNabb (EIS) agreed that public discourse and media interest was shifting from the impact of lockdown to the options for recovery, increasing the potential for complacency. He noted that the communications strategy was focussed on tackling the risk of complacency and acknowledged that as time went by there was the risk that resolve would slip. He suggested that FM/dFM highlight the issue at their press conference today;
- There was discussion on a range of possible factors which may be playing into increased traffic volumes. Katrina Godfrey (DfI) noted that a number of larger firms were now going back to work which would increase traffic volumes and there was some question of whether people were breaking the rules or whether growing familiarity was leading them to stretch the rules, for example by going shopping more often than previously; and
- It was agreed that further analysis of the data available was required to identify evidence to inform communication, enforcement and additional policy measures.

**Action: CCG2704/01 – Traffic data and public adherence to social distancing** - TEO, PSNI, DoH and DfI to gather and analyse traffic volume data and to develop a Policy response for consideration by the Executive on Wednesday 29 April 2020.

## 3. ACTIONS REVIEW

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David Sterling advised that there were currently 9 live actions, some of which are related. He requested updates on the following actions:

- **CCG2304/01 – Public Announcement on Ferries, Ports and Airports** – support for ferries was announced on Friday morning. Sue Gray (DoF) confirmed that details of the airports support package was almost complete and an announcement was imminent.
- **CCG1704/01 - Household Recycling Centres** – David Small (DAERA) confirmed that the submission in relation to HRC's was with the DAERA Minister. The letters and guidance will issue to Executive Colleagues and Councils once the submission has been cleared.
- **CCG1604/03 - Loss of Income for Councils** – Sue Gray (DoF) advised that the data received from DfC on Friday was still being worked through and she hoped to go back to the Executive this week.
- **CCG1404/01 – PPE for funeral directors** – Peter May (DoJ) confirmed that new arrangements meant there was no imminent problem with supply of PPE for funeral directors.
- **CCG0904/04 – Proposed support for the haulage industry** – Mike Brennan (DfE) advised that DfT had moved away for a UK-wide response on this issue and was considering a bespoke scheme for NI. This looked likely to take the form of a waiver scheme for empty lorries.

#### 4. SIT-REP UPDATE

Anthony Harbinson took the meeting through the positive issues arising from yesterday's Sit-Rep including:

- Minister Mallon has announced financial support of up to £17m for ferry operators jointly funded by Executive and the Department for Transport to assist ferry operators who provide critical supply routes across these islands for a two month period.
- The Executive has agreed to reopen cemeteries on a controlled basis during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Executive has announced that a Mental Health Champion will be appointed.
- HSC Trusts have reported significant challenges in attracting staff to work in Independent Sector care homes to support staff shortages.
- The NIHUB data portal had gone live and training will be provided.[DN: Need to confirm detail]

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- First 60 payments under £25k grant for hospitality, tourism, leisure and retail sector issued on 24 April. As at 26 April there were 2654 applications
- Irish Universities Association and Central Application Office has confirmed admission arrangements for students from NI will continue as normal.

### 5. LEGISLATION UPDATE

- Chris Stewart advised that there was nothing further to add to the earlier discussion under the actions.

### 6. MEMBER UPDATES

- **Local Government** – David Jackson (LG) confirmed that most cemeteries had opened over the weekend and were quite busy, however no issues had been reported and social distancing was being adhered to;
- **NIO** – Mark Larmour (NIO) advised that a review of social distancing was ongoing in advance of the full UKG review of lockdown due next week. He also advised that work was ongoing with regards to the capacity of the NHS in the medium term. He further advised that Whitehall was looking at how to reduce infections within Care Homes;
- **Communities** – Colum Boyle (DfC) advised that the Food Box Delivery Scheme was now reaching capacity with deliveries increasing from 4.5k in week one to 9k in week 2 and 18k last week. He also noted initial indications had been that the shielded group included 40,000 people but numbers were now 78,000. He stated that while the scheme was working well the volume was beginning to impact on logistics and on budget. He advised that they were taking steps to review scripts and do call-backs with the aim of ensuring the scheme was targeting the most vulnerable. He expected the review of the operation of the scheme to be with his Minister by the end of this week.

### 7. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

- Chris McNabb (EIS) advised that there was nothing further to add to the earlier discussion under the actions.

### 8. AOB AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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- HOCS advised that he was putting in place arrangements for the scheduled review of CCG. He noted that there was a reasonable case to reduce meetings to Monday, Wednesday and Friday. SitReps would still issue daily. He invited members to pass any input to the NIHub.
- **Date of next meeting:** 08:30, 28 April 2020, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, Block B, Castle Buildings.

**Action: CCG2704/02 – Frequency of CCG Meetings** - David Sterling (Chair, TEO) proposed a review of the CCG meeting rhythm, possibly reducing CCG meetings to Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays only, starting from Thursday 30 April 2020. NIHUB to lead review and CCG members to input.