

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

**Civil Contingency Group (COVID-19 Response) Meeting
Monday 11 May 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
Chief Constable Simon Byrne – PSNI
Assistant Chief Constable – Alan Todd
Lesley Hogg – NI Assembly
Maria Jennings – FSA
Mark Larmour – NIO
Peter May – DoJ
Stephen Reid – LG
Joan McCaffrey – LG
Chris McNabb – EIS
Denis McMahon – DAERA
Tracy Meharg – DfC
Jill Minne – NICS HR
Aidan Jennings – NIFRS
Michael Graham - NIFRS
Richard Pengelly – DoH
Karen Pearson – TEO
Chris Stewart – TEO
NR – TEO
Andrew McCormick – TEO
Anthony Harbinson – NI Hub
Hugh Widdis – DSO
Bernie Rooney – NI Hub
Andy Cole – NI hub
Jane Holmes – NI Hub
NR – NI Hub

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

2. COVID-19 - CURRENT SITUATION AND PROGNOSIS

Richard Pengelly (DoH) updated the meeting:

- To date there have been 4,119 confirmed cases in NI and 435 deaths;
- There has been a marked slowdown in the number of deaths in recent days; and
- The Executive will be discussing a paper on the review of the current regulations at its meeting today.

3. ACTIONS REVIEW

David Sterling requested updates on the following actions:

- **CCG2104/01 – Local Council Enforcement Powers** – David Sterling asked Richard Pengelly to confirm whether DoH would be providing a further paper to the Executive this week. Richard said that DoH had requested input from other departments and would bring a paper to the Executive once these had been received.

Peter May confirmed that the Justice Minister was considering bringing a proposal to the Executive to ensure that more agencies have enforcement powers than PSNI only.
- **CCG1604/03 – Loss of Income for Councils** – Tracy Meharg (DfC) advised that the work in relation to furloughing of council staff had now been completed. Sue Gray (DoF) said that work on the associated financing provision should be completed this week.
- **CCG0904/04 – Haulage Industry / Ferries / Ports** - Mike Brennan (DfE) confirmed there had been no further progress on the haulage issue.

4. SIT-REP UPDATE

Anthony Harbinson (COS) said that there was a good deal of new data and graphics in the Sitrep that members may find helpful.

David Sterling said that the Prime Ministers message yesterday (“Stay Alert”) was not being adopted in the three Devolved Administrations. He asked Chris McNabb to outline how we could ensure no confusion over different messaging approaches.

Chris said that he had been speaking to UK and had asked them not to advertise their message in NI, which they had agreed to. This should work well

for newspapers, but may be more difficult to manage on digital TV channels, which could mean an overlap of messaging and thus a potential for some confusion.

David Sterling asked PSNI about enforcement difficulties. Alan Todd said that there were signs of fraying at the edges on compliance, with officers reporting more push back from the public and a reduction in levels of cooperation. In addition, PSNI have noted an increase in demand for more ordinary policing around criminal behaviour and would be conducting a review of policing demand this week.

David Sterling asked Karen Pearson for an update on the proposed quarantine arrangements for ports and airports also announced by the Prime Minister. Karen said that the proposal is to have regulations in place for a 14 day isolation period by the end of May. The UK Government wants to ensure people are aware of the regulations before they travel. There will be exemptions for key workers, but no details on this as of yet. Arrangements will not apply to the land border, the Common Travel Area or France. The UK Government still needs to consider enforcement arrangements. Simon Byrne (PSNI) said that at a meeting of UK Police Chiefs yesterday, the consensus was that this was a Border Force issue and not a policing matter.

Mark Larmour (NIO) confirmed that arrangements for quarantine were due to be in place by the end of the month and that he would liaise with TEO on the details as they develop.

5. LEGISLATION UPDATE

Chris Stewart (TEO) advised that the Executive has confirmed they will not be following the English route at present. He foresaw some difficulties with the enforcement of regulation 5 if the decision was taken to change the rules on travel for leisure purposes.

6. MEMBER UPDATES

LG – Stephen Reid raised two issues:

1. He advised that three councils have opened recycling centres, while the rest were waiting on further guidance from the Executive. He said it was not helpful to have an inconsistent approach and was keen to have a decision on whether HRCs were considered a critical service or not.
2. In relation to the issue around local enforcement powers, he asked could local government be involved in the discussions with DoJ. Peter May advised that the paper would be looking at local enforcement powers across the board, not just local councils, for example the Health and Safety Executive may be one of the agencies considered. The timescale for this work was still under discussion but is not immediate.

Dfl – Katrina Godfrey reporting a growing concern around proposals for social distancing on public transport once capacity increases. As well as logistical issues to work through, this will have significant financial implications for transport companies.

7. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Chris McNabb (EIS) advised there was nothing further to add to that discussed earlier in the agenda.

8. AOB AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of next meeting: 08:30, Thursday 14 May 2020, 5th Floor Conference Room, Block B, Castle Buildings.