

**Meeting with Simon Coveney**  
**Thursday 8 October**  
**4:30-5:30pm**

**STEER**

- This will be your first bilateral since the Irish Government was formed and Coveney was confirmed to be retaining his Foreign Minister position. It will be a useful opportunity to take stock of a range of issues, including

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COVID

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**MAIN POINTS TO RAISE**

**1. Quad and Covid**

- I am keen to begin a more regular rhythm of engagement on tackling COVID between our Governments and the Executive in the quad format.
- When we are next able to return to our quad format with the FM and dFM, I'd be interested to cover:
  - The actions being taken as cases and hospitalisations increase across UK/NI/IE
  - Responding together to cross-border outbreaks
  - Effective communication of the joined up approach being taken by UK/NI/IE
- Covid-19 has allowed the Executive to cooperate meaningfully on a national crisis and I am pleased to see that they continue to work well together in tackling this pandemic.
- I am, however, keen to support the Executive in balancing their response to Covid-19 with other concurrent risks as we move into the winter.
- I am keen to reinstate regular senior official-level engagement between UKG, IG and the NIE to ensure coordination and alignment when possible.

**BACKGROUND**

**NI Restrictions**

Over the weekend both Robin Swann and Connor Murphy have indicated that the Executive is actively considering additional planned interventions to deal with the spread of Covid-19, possibly

including a circuit breaker. The meeting of the Executive today pushed back any public announcements till their meeting on Thursday.

The new restrictions in Derry-Londonderry and Strabane for pubs, restaurants, cafes and hotels mean they will only be able to open for takeaway, delivery and outdoor dining. People are also being advised to avoid unnecessary travel within the council area and to and from it. Where journeys are necessary, advice is to walk, cycle or use private transport. Schools and other educational settings will stay open. Under the new rules, all museums, galleries and cultural attractions in the council area are to remain closed. Hotels will only be allowed to provide a service to overnight guests.

Restrictions were extended across NI from 22 September and households are not allowed to mix in private dwellings (some exemptions continue).

### **Ireland restrictions**

Ireland's National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) have recommended that the highest level restrictions should be introduced across the Republic of Ireland. It was then decided by the cabinet that the whole of Ireland would move to level 3.

At Level 3 people can meet with 1 other household only to a max of 6 people; they must work from home where possible and avoid public transport. There are no sports matches; and complex rules around restaurants/bars which essentially mean they can only open and serve customers in an outside space.

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