



Northern
Ireland
Office

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READOUT | Coveney-SoS meeting - 16/3

3 messages

SOS Lewis <sos.lewis@nio.gov.uk>

16 March 2020 at 18:17

To: Senior Leadership Team <slt@nio.gov.uk>, Covid 19 <covid-19@nio.gov.uk>

Please see below readout from the call that just happened between SoS and the Tánaiste :

- The Secretary of State opened the discussion by proposing that he and the Tánaiste work together to agree a positive statement regarding the approach of the UK and Irish Government to the Covid-19 situation and to reinforce that they were actively working towards the same goal - to protect people from the virus.
- The Tánaiste said that a collective response on the island of Ireland was needed and without one it is likely that the pressure will continue to rise in Northern Ireland, especially as deaths from Covid-19 increase. He added that the issue has the potential to add to political dysfunction in Northern Ireland, as well as a public health issue.
- **The Tánaiste said that later this evening that the Irish Government would be announcing that they are placing movement restrictions on all travellers from overseas into Ireland, requiring a period of self-isolation but he did not give any further details on how long such self-isolation would need to last. This would include travellers from Great Britain, but Northern Ireland would be an exception to this general approach. Commercial traffic and trade would be exempt and the new approach would apply to passengers.**
- The Tánaiste said that the Irish Government decisions were being taken on the basis of scientific advice. The Secretary of State said that that was also the position of the UK Government and these were commonalities between the approaches that could be pointed to.
- The Secretary of State agreed with the Tánaiste that they should work together to ensure that discussions get underway between the Chief Medical Officer's of England, Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- The Secretary of State pressed UK Government and Irish Government officials to work together over the next 24 hours to agree language for a positive joint statement. He also said that they should ask officials to put together a plan for a joint meeting between the Secretary of State, First Minister, deputy First Minister and Tánaiste - potentially late this week or early next week.
- The Tánaiste said he had no issue with the statement and was happy for UK and Irish officials to begin working together on language of the statement and objectives for a potential joint meeting.



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16 March 2020 at 18:27

To: Senior Leadership Team <slt@nio.gov.uk>, Covid 19 <covid-19@nio.gov.uk>, Ciaran Hayes <ciaran.hayes@nio.gov.uk>

cc/ Ciaran

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SOS Lewis <sos.lewis@nio.gov.uk>

16 March 2020 at 19:17

To: Senior Leadership Team <slt@nio.gov.uk>, Covid 19 <covid-19@nio.gov.uk>, Ciaran Hayes <ciaran.hayes@nio.gov.uk>, PS SOS <ps.sos@nio.gov.uk>

Very quick readout from Coveney's comments at the press conference.

- Irish Government advising against all non-essential travel overseas, to last until at least 29 March, including to the UK, but not NI.
- Irish Government is imposing restrictions on all who come into Ireland (except NI), asking them to restrict their movement. When they land they'll be given clear instructions. Not self-isolation, but significant restrictions on movement. Based on what we're seeing in the EU.

Best

NR

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