



Northern
Ireland
Office

Covid 19 Mailbox <covid-19shared@nio.gov.uk>

Re: COVID Operations Committee - DA Attendance

1 message

To: **NR** <[redacted]@nio.gov.uk> 5 October 2020 at 10:31
NR <[redacted]@cabinetoffice.gov.uk>, Covid 19 Mailbox <covid-19@nio.gov.uk>

Hi **NR**

Thanks for this.

It would be good to get clarity please on if TOs can get a read out, given we aren't allowed an official on the call for Covid O?

Many thanks

NR

Policy Adviser (Healthcare)
 Constitution, Rights and Healthcare Policy Group

T **Irrelevant & Sensitive**
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On Fri, 2 Oct 2020 at 18:37, **NR** <[redacted]@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> wrote:
 Evening all,

Thanks again for the call this morning. A useful and productive conversation and really pleased to hear that while further work is still required to make sure DA attendance at Covid-O is as beneficial as possible to everyone, yesterday's meeting still felt like a really positive start.

Quickly reiterating some of the points discussed on the call, and have included a note with some of the key focus areas and scope for the COVID Operations Committee separately which I hope helps address some of the questions raised.

Attendance

- Invites will be extended to DA FM/DFMs by default. It is up to them to delegate to another senior minister as appropriate.
- This will equate to one minister each for WG and SG, and two ministers by default for NIE (recognising that on occasion an additional minister with the relevant portfolio may also be required to adhere to the NIE's power-sharing agreement)
- DAs can invite one official per agenda item. Political Special Advisers are **not** permitted to substitute for policy officials
- DAs will need to confirm the names of all attendees to the secretariat in advance of the meeting to ensure they are permitted access to the virtual meeting

The rationale for the above approach is to ensure we're able to protect the integrity of the meeting and allow Ministers the space for free and frank discussion. While some additional flexibility was permitted for the first meeting to accommodate for short notice, the secretariat will need to be strict on these rules moving forward, and will likely refuse permission to those looking to join calls who are not pre-identified attendees. If there are any concerns with any of the above please do reach out.

Timings

- Colleagues were broadly supportive that Covid-O meetings could continue to run on a Thursday though there was a clear request for the meeting to be held earlier in the day.
- The Secretariat will review and communicate new proposed timings back out to DAs as quickly as possible.
- As far as possible we will endeavour to ensure that the timing is then a regular, fixed slot, to make it easier for all to arrange ministerial attendance

Paper distribution

- In order to maintain the confidentiality of papers, secretariat would prefer not to distribute papers to a shared mailbox. However, we recognise the need for colleagues to access papers quickly, in order to brief ministers.
- Please can each DA provide the secretariat with a maximum of five names to receive papers, alongside their job titles and contact details. All named individuals will then be copied in for paper distribution.
- These papers are shared on the understanding that they are for named recipients and those with an involvement in briefing their respective ministers. Papers must not be forwarded more widely than this without the permission of the Secretariat.

Issues of interest for Covid-O Thursday 8 October

- Issues of interest raised included:
 - Financial Support mechanisms
 - PPE and Supply chains
 - "Stay Local" travel restrictions
 - Higher Education
- Secretariat will liaise with CDL's office and communicate back out to DAs the proposed agenda by next Tuesday's call at the latest.
- There was recognition by all that there is no appetite for items to be brought to Covid-O for the sake of it, and it will be important to work out where alternative fora are discussing items - such as Winter Summit, or quad calls - in order to prioritise future Covid-O agenda items.

As ever, should you have questions or concerns on any of the above, please do reach out.

Wishing you all a restful weekend.

Best regards,

NR

 

Name Redacted

C-19 Taskforce

Cabinet Secretariat

E: **NR**@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

M: **I&S**

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