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**CHAIR'S BRIEF FOR SUMMIT BETWEEN UKG AND THE DEVOLVED
ADMINISTRATIONS ON WINTER CHALLENGES**

**Via teleconference
12th October 2020, 14:00-15:30**

You are chairing a call with **the Devolved Administrations** on the challenges facing the UK over the winter period.

The **objectives** of the meeting are to:

The following will join by teleconference

- **NICOLA STURGEON (FIRST MINISTER OF SCOTLAND)**
- **MARK DRAKEFORD (FIRST MINISTER OF WALES)**
- **ARLENE FOSTER (FIRST MINISTER OF NORTHERN IRELAND)**
- **MICHELLE O'NEILL (deputy FIRST MINISTER OF NORTHERN IRELAND)**
- **SECRETARIES OF STATES for THE TERRITORIAL OFFICES**
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Commented [1]: to add which DA Cab Sec will attend

AGENDA

1. **Welcome and Objectives (10 minutes)** You
2. **Latest Approach (25 minutes)** You
3. **Data (20 minutes)** Baroness Harding
4. **Delivery and Operational Issues (25 minutes)**
 - a. **Testing**
5. **Concurrent Risks (10 minutes)** You/CCS
6. **Conclusions and next steps** You

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Item 1: Welcome and Objectives (10 minutes)

Introductory points to make:

- Welcome the Ministers to the Winter Summit and thank them and their officials for the work undertaken to deliver this summit.
- [Note the considerable fluidity of events as all four nations look to respond to rising case numbers]
- Welcome the close collaboration that has taken place between the UK government and the DAs in the response to date, and the on-going criticality of close working.
- Set out your aspirations for the Winter Summit and the reasons you were keen to host the event. You should note the ambition of all four nations to fulfil the commitments made in the joint statement [tabled].
- *[You may want to note that given the time pressures surrounding today, the agenda has had to be revised at short notice. The items that will no longer be discussed in this meeting - higher education, care homes, vaccine development - remain key issues warranting discussion and will be remitted to alternative fora such as the weekly Covid-O meeting as soon as possible.]*

Commented [2]: Further updates possible over the weekend.

Item 2: Latest Approach (25 minutes)

Objective: To discuss the current and future UKG and DA strategic approaches to tackling the virus; to identify opportunities for further alignment wherever possible; and actions for mitigating the risks caused by any divergence in approach.

Introductory points to make:

- Recognise that we are at a critical juncture in our response to the virus, with rapid increases in case numbers in recent weeks in every part of the UK. Difficult choices have been, and will continue to be, required on the action to be taken. The UKG is focused on taking action to protect public health, while also protecting the economy, which is a challenging balance.
- [Placeholder: Outline the steps taken by UKG over the previous few days to address the rise in case numbers, and provide an overview of the UKG strategy going forward].
- Recognise that DAs have all either taken, or been considering, additional measures. Thanks to the close collaboration between UKG and the DAs there are many points of alignment between these approaches, however inevitably there are also some differences. The UK government and DA ministers will want to consider, where these differences are confusing and create challenges for our citizens and businesses, how divergence can be avoided, or its impact mitigated.
- Thank DAs for their attendance at Covid Operations Committee meetings, and outline your aspiration that this will present an opportunity to find further areas of alignment and to manage existing divergence in a way that helps fight the virus and encourage compliance.

Commented [3]: Further updates needed over the weekend.

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Invite DA ministers to:

- Provide an overview of their current approach to tackling the virus; particularly focusing on any anticipated future action and the criteria they are likely to employ to make these decisions.

Background

- **LINES TO TAKE ON WALES TRAVEL ISSUE**
- **LINES TO TAKE ON ECONOMIC SUPPORT**

Commented [4]: Lines to be added over the weekend. Awaiting lines from HMT.

Item 3: Data (20 minutes)

Objective: To build consensus on the value of UK-wide datasets to inform UKG and DA decision making, and to consider progress made by the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) in supporting UK-wide this. To build further momentum behind the sharing of data through the JBC.

Introductory points to make:

- Outline your hope that the JBC is already, and will continue to be, an invaluable resource to UKG and the DAs in delivering an effective, data-driven response to Covid. You should recognise the great value of the JBC as a UK-wide body, with an important role to fulfil in providing a rich data picture across the whole of the UK, to support the decisions made by all four administrations.
- This will enrich the basis on which the National Alert level is determined, and provide a much wider evidence base for assessing differential impacts of the virus across the UK. It will create an ongoing feedback loop to assess the efficacy of different types of intervention, enhancing our ability to control the virus.
- Note that political agreement to the role of the JBC was reached in August, and that good progress is being made on the agency agreements, which will establish the legal basis for the JBC to operate UK-wide, with positive discussions at official level. Note the progress made in areas including governance, with the JBC Technical Board, which CMOs from all four nations sit on, having met twice.
- Ongoing work will be required between UKG and DA officials to establish data flows rapidly, to build that rich UK-wide data picture. UKG will certainly prioritise this important work, and you hope DAs will be able to do the same.

Turn to Claire Gardiner, Director General of the Joint Biosecurity Centre to present the Joint Biosecurity Centre slides.

You may wish to ask:

- How can the JBC support effective collaboration between UKG and the DAs, and particularly inform effective decision making across the UK?
- At what point will the JBC be in a position to provide a full data picture across the UK, and what can be done to ensure this is provided as rapidly as possible?

Invite DA ministers to comment on:

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- Their priorities for the work of the JBC, and areas where they believe UK-wide data would add particular value to the response across the UK, and to UKG-DA collaboration.
- Whether there is action UKG can take to speed up the process of data sharing between UKG and the DAs.

You should close the discussion by:

- Asking that the JBC continue rapid work to finalise agency agreements between UKG and the DAs and to establish the necessary data flows to provide a UK-wide data picture as soon as possible. You may wish to suggest that the JBC provide a status update in a few weeks - to be submitted to yourself and FMs and discussed at one of your regular calls, or alternatively at Covid-O.
- Outlining your ambition that - once there is a rich data picture - the JBC provides a regular dashboard to you and FMs to support your regular calls.

Item 4: Delivery and Operational Issues (25 minutes)

Introductory points to make:

- Note the regular rhythm of engagement with DAs through Covid-O, and the aspiration to ensure this meeting is as useful as possible for all four nations in identifying the outstanding delivery and operational challenges.
- Note the desire to establish a clear forward look with sufficient notice to allow all nations to prepare for agenda items properly.
- You should note that one area of priority from UKG perspective will be alignment of our vaccine deployment strategies. You should propose this be considered for discussion at Covid-O in the near future.
- **To Note:** While advice on prioritisation for the deployment of the COVID-19 vaccine will be provided by JCVI, final vaccine prioritisation decisions will be made independently by the DHSC SoS and ministers in each nation. Scottish ministers have written to DHSC SoS to ask for the Scottish allocation of vaccines to be based on population size instead of on the number of people in the JCVI priority list. There is still work to be done to understand what the allocation sizes would look like in both models.

Invite DA ministers to agree on aspiration to be as collaborative and aligned in approach to vaccine deployment as possible.

Invite DA ministers to outline the items they view as priorities for further discussion at Covid-O and to set out the decisions and agreement they believe are still needed.

- **Testing**

Objective: To take stock of current testing capacity across the UK and to discuss the challenges the system is likely to face during the winter period and how these can be mitigated, to ensure that testing is available to those citizens who need it most.

Introductory points to make:

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- We all recognise that an effective testing and contact tracing system is a fundamental component of all of our responses to the crisis.
- While each administration has their own contact tracing systems, a proportion of testing capacity is provided by UKG for all parts of the UK. It is therefore helpful for us to collectively consider current testing capacity, review any challenges, and particularly to discuss our respective approaches prioritising testing capacity in our jurisdictions.

Turn to Baroness HARDING to present on the expected ramp up of testing capacity in the coming weeks; how testing is currently allocated in England and the further allocation decisions yet to be made; and how UKG and the DAs can collaborate to ensure that testing reaches those who need it most.

Invite DA ministers to outline their approaches to allocation of tests for different groups, particularly highlighting where this differs to the approaches taken by other administrations, and any concerns arising from such differences.

You should close the discussion by:

- Outlining that working collaboratively to be as aligned as possible in prioritising those eligible for tests across the UK will support clear communications to citizens and perceptions of 'fairness'.
- You may want to suggest that UKG and the DAs receive an update on testing capacity in a few weeks' time, either through one of your regular calls with FMs, or through a Covid O discussion.

• **LINES TO TAKE ON MOONSHOT/MASS SCREENING**

Item 5: Concurrent Risks (10 minutes)

Objective: Identify concurrent risks over the Winter where further coordination would be needed.

Points to make:

- Note that the usual winter risks will pose additional challenges and potentially place further pressure on the NHS and public services at a crucial time.

Invite **Roger Hargreaves, Civil Contingencies Secretariat** to draw out any changes in the risk picture and identify thematic issues in X-UK preparedness for concurrent risks over the Winter, and establish where further coordination is required.

Invite DA Ministers to outline where they may hold concerns on any of the concurrent risks set out in CCS' Winter Horizon Scan, or if any issues have been overlooked.

Background

- A revised Winter Horizon Scan was shared with the DAs ahead of this call

- **LINES TO TAKE ON 2020 TRANSITION PLANNING**

Commented [5]: Awaiting latest lines from T&T.

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- Recognise the interplay and overlap in some areas between Covid-19 response work and transition planning. Note that DAs now attend key operational delivery meetings of both Covid-O and XO. Propose that a more detailed discussion on this is considered at XO in the near future.

Item 6: Conclusions and next steps (5 minutes)

In summary, note that:

- Those items identified as priorities for further discussion will be added to forward look and brought to Covid-O, or alternative ministerial fora as soon as possible.
- On-going collaboration across all nations will be critical to ensuring an effective response to the ongoing challenges Covid presents in the coming months.
- We are not proposing of a press release following this discussion, and would ask that all nations agree a common approach in advance should any nation wish to propose otherwise.

Commented [6]: to be added over the weekend.