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Subject: In confidence - NI Hub for Covid-19

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All

Sharing this for **info only** ahead of the TEO meeting tomorrow, to allow us some thinking time. This information has not been cleared within TEO, so treat carefully please as I am using contacts to get this.

OVERVIEW

TEO is preparing a paper for the Executive meeting on Monday (16th) regarding setting up a NI Hub. Currently no indication it will happen sooner than that.

In their proposal, the Hub will have 28 roles.

- 13 of these are Departmental Liaison Officers (including NIO, FSA, PSNI, ROI)
- 15 roles are required for general operation of the Hub.

For context this is about 50% of what TEO ran in the full C3 Brexit structure (55 roles).

The flow of information will be in the form of Sitreps from Departments as well as down-reps. There will be no working groups as in Brexit C3 as this is focused on one issue/cause. No Ops cohort either.

Health is the only DOC currently active. DfE has put a call out for volunteers for their DOC.

The initial rhythm will be 12-hour shifts (0700 - 1900), with on-call/report by exception arrangements overnight.

TEO is recommending a 1:5 staffing resource model. In reality, they expect to run a three-person shift model, meaning 4 days on and 3 off.

CCG is expected to meet at least twice a week, but this could move to daily.

ISSUES/CONCERNS/POINTS TO NOTE

TEO have not fully defined a role for the Executive regarding reporting mechanisms and the link from CCG to Executive.

No TEO staff to work/be placed in London.

Staffing - Initially the Hub will be staffed by TEO until volunteers are confirmed. TEO propose to seek volunteers from existing C3 volunteer lists so minimal training required. However, TEO has concerns that the numbers volunteering (or allowed to volunteer by Departments), will be low. This is firstly due to no financial remuneration being issued for any NICS staff for their role in Brexit C3 - so no incentive for uptake. Secondly, if Departments have their own contingency plans, and lose 20% of staff, they will be unwilling to provide volunteers for the HUB, as maintaining their own emergency response will be essential.

The Hub has the potential to work remotely, but there are limited laptops for this. I have been told that IT assist were sourcing 10,000 laptops for NICS to aid home working, but struggling to get them.

NIO ROLE

My initial view is there is a clear need for NIO to be involved the the HUB as liaison officers. Not only for oversight, but also to aid connections E/W and N/S, as well as MACA requests. We also have the advantage of UK Govt situational awareness to feed in. And of course will need to keep SoS updated. I would suggest we ask the previous NIO C3 volunteers to gauge interest, or if they would sign up again.

To be aware, I get the sense that NIO may be asked by TEO to help staff the HUB, putting NIO staff into general HUB roles. TEO may make this request if they do not get enough volunteers. Not sure how this would play through Executive, but I would be almost certain that it would need to be NIO staff, i.e. not using MOD personnel as before. It may be a step too far for some political parties. We need to think of our appetite to help in this, if we can at all. And of course, seek SoS view.

The Hub could be activated in skeleton form as early as Tuesday 17th March.

NEXT STEPS

We are meeting TEO at 4pm on Friday. Copying in Mark Byers for his views, and if, from his vast experience, it is worth him dialing to the meeting?

Hope that is logical. Happy to discuss further

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