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QUAD | READOUT - 9 JUNE

Secretary of State updated on the current UK border regulations and implementation that began this week. He asked whether the First and deputy First Minister had heard of any issues so far during the implementation of the regulation in NI.

First Minister said that as there is no international travel into NI there has not been too much. She confirmed that no issues had been raised by PSNI.

Tánaiste outlined the Irish measures and enforcement. He said that whilst they were operating slightly different systems, both regimes were very much complementary and were seeking to achieve similar outcomes. He said that they would review the need for Irish citizens to self-isolate and that Ireland is now starting to talk to EU countries regarding travel zones/travel bubbles with countries of the same risk levels or lower. He pointed out that airlines were now aggressively advertising to try to get people travelling.

Secretary of State confirmed that the UK Government position is still no non-essential international travel.

NI health minister said that in regard to travel, NI and Irish officials working together to implement border measures. He outlined the positives of the current NI situation: 0 deaths in the last 2 days, less than 50 positive tests since 24 May, and decrease in outbreaks in care homes. He said the Executive would meet on Thursday to look at the next phase of relaxing restrictions. He said that the snap announcement on Friday from Ireland caught NI by surprise and they would be grateful of advance notice next time.

Irish health min said he was delighted to see no deaths in NI for past 2 days. He said he wanted to see progress across the whole of the Island. On the travel advice, he stressed that it would be very helpful to reiterate the non-essential travel message and the public health advice. He said that the Governments should not let Michael O'Leary dictate travel advice. He outlined the stable phase that Ireland was now in with the R below 1, between 0.4 and 0.7, and 4 days in a row with less than 30 new cases. He said that there was a lot of testing being conducted but not a huge amount of referrals from GPs. He said that Ireland was beginning to target testing on vulnerable sectors - for example nursing homes. He pointed to the encouraging signs in care homes, and spoke about the independent panel on care homes that had been established. He said that commencing phase 2 would see increased movement and getting through phase 2 was critical.

Secretary of State said that they are seeing a similar trend across the UK. He agreed that we should reinforce the point around essential international travel against non-essential international travel, in particular in making people pause and think before booking.

Tánaiste said that he understands that each time Ireland makes an announcement, it places pressure on the NI Executive to respond. He said that there are practical issues, with it being difficult to talk to people in the Executive before Irish cabinet but he understood that CMOs were speaking regularly. He said that the next Irish review point on 29 June would be more important on coordination, especially as Ireland is looking to open up the tourism industry. He said officials should talk to each other but did acknowledge the issue raised by the NI health minister.

Secretary of State said that the timing for the next quad was key. He said the next important UK dates were 15 June and 4 July.

Deputy First Minister said it was important to have conversations on relaxing measures. She said that there were a couple of crucial elements she would like coordination on where to go next. First, on the 1/2m rule, she was keen that everyone arrives at that point together in order to avoid the right/wrong argument. She said this was important for schools and hospitality. Second, she said the issue around face masks being mandatory on public transport. She said she did not want them to run ahead of each other.

Secretary of State said on the hospitality industry, he had heard views from organisations that the impact of a shift to a 1m rule would bring viability of hospitality venues up to 75% from only 30% at 2m.

Tánaiste said that the hospitality sector in Ireland believe there would be 80,000 job losses with a 2m rule and only 10,000 job losses at 1m rule. He said it was key that the Governments have access to the data to ensure that they understand the public health/economic risk when making decisions.

Irish health minister outlined the discussions in Ireland around the need for specific hospitality health measures.

NI health minister said that there is time consideration, which goes alongside the 1/2m discussion that is often overlooked.

First Minister said there would be a further discussion at the Executive on Thursday as a stocktake.

Tánaiste asked for an update on the UK's app.

SOS said that the app was in the pilot phase and it was just one part of the wider test and trace plan that was currently in place. He added that it would be good to get Education ministers together to discuss schools shortly.

Tánaiste agreed on the Education ministers and said that it would be useful to have the next Quad meeting in advance of the 29 June. He outlined plans in Ireland for schools to open in July but only for a certain category of children.

Irish health minister said that the first step of proposals were being brought to Cabinet by the Irish Education Secretary next week and he would hopefully be in a position to share with the NI health minister.

Secretary of State concluded the meeting and thanked all for joining.

ATTENDEES:

Secretary of State

Tánaiste

First Minister

Deputy First Minister

Irish Health Minister

NI Health Minister

Gordon Lyons

Declan Kearney

Madeleine Alessandri, NIO

Anthony Harbinson, NI Exec

Barbara Cullinane, Irish Gov

Brenda Boylan, Irish Gov

Ciarán Hayes, NIO

Clare Brosnan, Irish Gov

Name
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David Sterling, NI Exec

Fergal Mythen, Irish Gov

Laurence Simms, Irish Gov

Mark Larmour, NIO

Mark Goodfellow, NI Exec

Mark Hanniffy, Irish Gov

Mark Ovens, NI Exec SpAd

Oliver Legard, NIO SpAd

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