

**From:** Andy Pike <andy.pike@nio.gov.uk>  
**To:** Covid 19 <covid-19@nio.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Fwd: FM's call with CDL - rough readout  
**Date:** Wed, 6 May 2020 10:27:33 +0100  
**Inline-Images:** image001.jpg; image002.jpg

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Ahir, Ashok <Ashok.Ahir@ukgovwales.gov.uk>  
Date: Wed, 6 May 2020 at 10:26  
Subject: RE: FM's call with CDL - rough readout  
To: § Name Redacted <Name Redacted@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> Name Redacted  
<Name Redacted@cabinetoffice.gov.uk>, A x Aiken <alex.aiken@cabinetoffice.gov.uk>  
Cc: Claire Pimm <claire.pimm@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> Name Redacted <Name Redacted@scotlandoffice.gov.uk>  
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Here's our full readout of the call – clearly the variation in the 'R' number across the nations will be a key discussion point if divergence to the easing timetable begins to occur.

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## READOUT

### Introductions and aims

- CDL outlined the aim of the call: to continue the shared understanding that has underpinned the covid-19 lockdown so far and address any issues in advance of the upcoming review

### Opening round of comments

- FM Scotland:
  - Supports 4 nations approach and coordination, although evidence may mean different timescales needed on occasion (but not “all of the time”).
  - All 4 constituent parts need to be involved in formulating this approach for it to last – and this is not always the case e.g. in the dark on what the PM plans to announce on Sunday.
  - Where talking about devolved responsibilities there needs to be respect for individual decision making
  - The 4 nations approach in her view is as strong as it could be at this point.
  - 4 nations approach cannot result in one part of the UK needing to lift restrictions before the evidence supports this, and in Scotland the R value is higher than some other nations. View is that they are already close to the edge of what Scotland can do

- CDL asked in reserved areas, which are the areas that they have concern that UKG may be putting DAs in a difficult position. FM responded that border control could be one, and one where there is a split of responsibilities is economic/workplace measures, which will come into conflict with their (devolved) health objectives
- FM Wales:
  - Keen to work towards coming out of lockdown on a 4 nation basis, agreeing a set of common measures and timetable.
  - Urged colleagues to remember the emergency legislation requires them to put public health/safety above all else, and this is particularly crucial at the early stages.
  - Also agreed with FM Scotland that they are in the dark on what the PM is planning to announce on Sunday, a situation he described as “unsatisfactory”. They would like to be able to contribute, and this would maximise the chance of them agreeing on a common exit
  - Reinforced that they too are very close to R1, and in some parts of N Wales their infection rate is climbing
  - Workplace guidance needs to be more specific and workplace particular in order to persuade people to return to work
  - On outdoor spaces for leisure – if UKG are considering liberalising (e.g. visiting beaches) that will cause WG enormous problems in places such as N. Wales
  - On health measures at the border – if ROI travelling to UK is going to require a 14 day quarantine, then people are not going to travel and there will be a real distortion onto Welsh ports such as Holyhead
- FM NI
  - Concerned about reverse of FMs point that people may travel from UK into NI in order to enter into ROI freely
  - 4 nations approach has enabled clear messaging which has been positive, but there are compliance issues and the public need hope that at some stage soon there will be movement
  - NI R value is below 1 but only just so they too are cautious
  - They want a roadmap of criteria for lifting, if not dates
  - They are likely to do their review on Thursday, ahead of the BH weekend
- dFM NI
  - Keen to continue to follow the science, and the virus is spreading at a different pace for them
  - Likewise whilst the review on Thurs is unlikely to lead to any major shifts, they want a roadmap to be able to communicate how and when this will happen
- SoSNI
  - Nothing major to add, supports 4 nation approach
- SoSW
  - Stakeholders are as keen as politicians to see a 4 nations approach
  - On how to signal hope and movement, there are some areas where there is a relatively low risk and high reward in terms of the positive signal sent
  - On public health being the driver of lockdown, he reminded colleagues that a society which has a collapsed economy has potentially as many public health issues and complications as a pandemic
  - Questioned the validity of the R0.9 value in Wales – is it from a significant sample size for example?
- SoSS
  - Advice from stakeholders is that they want 1 message across the UK
  - Virus doesn't respect borders and so we need to try to come out together across the UK despite R numbers differing slightly
  - On the NHSX app, it is important to promote heavily across the UK as it will only work with enough people signed up
    - FM Scotland responded that their app are not competing products, they do different things. If they want the 4 nations to sign up to the app, which they would like to do, they need questions answered and more involvement in the formulation. CDL said he would follow up on this with SoSDHSc and make sure their questions (communicated earlier in the afternoon) are responded to
- CDL
  - On regional differences in R – they need to share the evidence behind that and the supporting data to help them refine their propositions.

- FM Scotland responded that each of the 4 nations are using the same modelling, but it is coming out with different estimates
- CDL repeated that the principle of data sharing still stands
- Agrees entirely on the importance of evidence, but there are judgements to be taken on when to lift restrictions
  - On outdoor spaces – the science tells us that the virus spreads less easily in open spaces, which plays to a broader point that there are small adjustments that can be made e.g. people exercising more than once in a day from their own home
  - On schools etc. this will have to wait for a further lowering in the R0 number across the UK
- On CTA (FM NI's point) – will ensure that any policies fully respect this
- On borders – wants to ensure that there is a UK wide approach so that there is consistency for someone arriving in Heathrow as in Edinburgh

## 2<sup>nd</sup> round of comments

- FM NI
  - Asked if there would be any change in messaging
    - CDL said there would be a shift, but not a precipitous one, and it would need to be a UK wide
- FM Wales
  - Agreed with all of CDL's replies
  - On data – like FM Scotland they are **using the same approach as the rest of the UK on the R value but there may be some Wales specific data which they add to enrich their modelling, which they will gladly share.** Requested to see SAGE papers
  - On increased freedoms around exercising – a message that appears to encourage anyone to head to the beach, mountains etc, and results in people travelling across the border to Wales will cause huge difficulty. CDL recognised this point
- FM Scotland
  - On the data sharing they are happy to share the data they are feeding in, like FM Wales
  - They want this to lead to a genuinely collaborative formulation of criteria, which needs to happen in the next couple of days because at the moment on the basis of the evidence there are not further changes other than exercise that they would be currently willing to sign up to
  - In principle supportive of the rigorous 4 nations border approach, but would like to see more detail in writing so that they can feed in practical points
    - CDL responded that UKGG would be talking to officials in this shortly and that at GPSMIG they would be discussing proposals in detail, which they will share the papers etc. for with the DAs in advance
- CDL reiterated that the approach he had previously outlined: that broadly any announcements on Sunday will be small tweaks, but that they will hope to lay out how (if the criteria are met) they will look to lift restrictions further
- CDL suggested that increasing amounts of info would be shared over the coming days

CDL thanked colleagues for their time and efforts adhering to the UK wide approach, and closed the call

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**Subject:** Re: FM's call with CDL - rough readout

Name Redacted - appreciate the readout, copying Alex too for sight

Did you get a sense they were all being genuine about moving at the pace of the slowest nation?( I ask as FM Scotland seems to always want to be ahead of rest of UK)

Secondly we could set up a briefing for FMs/SOS's for App briefing - we've been set up briefings for journo's can we offer this to them - if you think worth doing I'll ask the team to arrange via you)

Name Redacted

Director of Communications  
Cabinet Office  
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T: Personal Data

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On Tue, 5 May 2020 at 19:07, Name Redacted <[@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)> wrote:

A rough - quick - readout of the FM's call that has just recently finished.

Name Redacted

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Name Redacted <[@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)>

Date: Tue, 5 May 2020 at 19:04

Subject: FM's call with CDL - rough readout

**Names Redacted**

Quick readout from the call with the FMs.

In a nutshell it was all very amicable but they are all frustrated about the lack of information coming from the UKG - especially about the PM's proposed statement on Sunday.

FM Scotland - want a 4 nation approach - even if we end up doing things differently because of the evidence; but if we have a 4N approach then we all need to be involved; I have no idea what the PM is planning to say on Sunday; we cannot relax things ahead of the evidence; data could lead to us moving at different paces across the UK or we can agree to move at the pace of the slowest nation. I think either is an option.

FM Wales - want a 4 nation approach with a common timetable; public health must dictate; no idea on the PM statement - not satisfactory; strong concern that relaxation might involve people being allowed to exercise more than once - which is ok - but it must be clear that people can't travel (eg to North Wales) to start going to the beach/climbing mountains.

Also had concerns over Common Travel Area and people coming from Ire to Wales facing restrictions they wouldn't have if they came via NI.

FMNI - CTA concerns; keen that messaging starts to offer people some light at the end of the tunnel; regulations should remain in place; want to know what the PM is going to say on Sunday; but NI will have to announce their review before that - prob on Thursday - there will be little or no change. DFMI reinforced these points.

SoSNI - main point that we need to offer a pathway for business otherwise they are going to make some business decisions that will hurt NI economy.

SoSW - also pushed the economy point;

SoSS - agreed with FMS point about moving at the pace of slowest; also called for the UK NHS app to be pushed across the UK.

FMS - said need more detail on app - not forthcoming at present.

Other key points to flag from conversation part of call:

CDL - agree that evidence needs to lead; could see some small changes being made re exercise etc; need to respect the CTA; bigger changes re schools/work places will require the R to be lower across the UK; any relaxations in short order after Sunday will be small and guided by evidence; hope to share more over coming days.

FMW - wants formal access to SAGE papers for WG;

FMS - wants more info over next few days and to see evidence of a collaborative approach.

CDL thanked everyone for their continued help.

PG

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**Name Redacted**



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**Andrew Pike OBE**

**Director of Communications**

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