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**Subject:** [READOUT] 2021-03-17 CDL and MFA Coveney call

**Date:** Wed, 17 Mar 2021 11:30:06 +0000

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Hi all

Please find a readout of this morning's phone call below.

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CDL opened by outlining concerns about data sharing that had been raised by the NIE and WG on his most recent FM weekly phone call.

MFA Coveney set out the current process by which travellers come into Dublin and then move outside the country, including the use of a passenger locator form which records contact details and addresses. He noted that data sharing issues had been raised through several forums with the NIE and NIO. The Irish Government had been working closely with their Attorney General, data commissioners and others to work through outstanding legal questions around use of data and GDPR. They were now waiting for the NIE to return feedback on the matter following an exchange of letters. The Minister was certain that through intense engagement a positive solution could be found.

Minister Coveney then noted a recent media report that had said Minister Swan was blindsided by the Irish Government decision to temporarily suspend the use of Astrogeneca vaccines. The Minister noted that the Irish and Northern Ireland Medical Officers had discussed the decision ahead of the announcement, but he was unsure whether Minister Swan had been aware of this. It was important to ensure that information sharing such as this was reciprocated as much as possible.

Turning to international travel, the Ministers noted that the Irish Government were likely to introduce more severe restrictions in the coming weeks. This may create loopholes for travellers coming through from the UK into Ireland, and the Governments should work together to prevent this. CDL and the Minister discussed a potential expansion of data sharing agreements to cover both London and Dublin, and possibly Wales, as a route for addressing this. MFA Coveney noted their political willingness to do as much as possible in this

space. CDL asked that his officials and legal teams work together on any barriers to data sharing with the Irish Government.

CDL noted he would speak to NIE later today, and asked that transport and health teams in UKG reach out to the Irish Government to start a conversation on data sharing. CDL then ran through the latest red list countries, and changes to travel restrictions.

Bringing the call to a close, MFA Coveney noted his desire to build on the relationship between the Irish Government and the UK Government in the coming weeks. Genuine problems had been raised recently, but both sides had a duty to address any polarisation or tensions. CDL agreed, and thanked the Minister for his time.

- **Action:** **NR** could you please share the minutes of tonight's Covid call with **NR** and Paul Johnston once we have them agreed?



Private Office: The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for Cabinet

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Please send any **diary related emails and invites** to [cdl.diary@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:cdl.diary@cabinetoffice.gov.uk).

Please find our updated **box times and submissions guidance** [here](#).

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