

## **Minutes**

### **Executive Covid Taskforce meeting 28 December 2021**

#### **Via Zoom**

#### **Attending**

**Jayne Brady, John Smith, Karen Pearson, Peter May, Colum Boyle, Tracy Meharg, Denis McMahon, Bill Pauley, Jane Holmes, Shane Murphy, Peter Luney, Richard Pengelly, [Name Redacted]**

Jayne Brady reviewed work to date, including making of regulations before Christmas and thanked colleagues for their work.

#### **CTA**

Peter Luney set out the current position in respect of CTA restrictions.

Colum Boyle advised on HMT position, noting that no further money has been made available. Colum also anticipated that the position would remain unchanged unless GB moved on restrictions.

#### **Health update**

Richard Pengelly advised that data is still being gathered and that given the holiday period this will be a slower process than usual. Testing etc. will not see a normal throughput at this time. [Richard left the meeting]

#### **Sectoral engagement**

Karen Pearson updated colleagues on recent engagement around enforcement and outlined concerns expressed by some, including the hotel sector.

#### **DOF**

Colum Boyle recorded his thanks to colleagues who developed the policy around the recently announced financial support package which was agreed by urgent decision. DOF Minister will continue to monitor the data and impact on the ground for eligible businesses. The scheme is due to commence in early January, subject to the risk of losing critical staff to deliver this.

Retrospective scheme for nightclubs: Colum updated on latest thinking around a settled position on the definition of a nightclub. This will be included in the next ECT Executive paper.

Shane Murphy updated on support for the hotel industry, the possibility of further calls for financial support and the need to balance the health of this sector in the short term with any response. Bill Pauley noted the loan scheme remains an option for this industry but it has seen little uptake to date. Colleagues noted the many complexities around broad funding schemes compared to the previous support schemes.

**Enforcement**

Peter May advised that PSNI indicate that the Covid cert scheme appears to be running smoothly while minor contact tracing issues remain with some business closed briefly to ensure correct compliance. Table service will be included in enforcement from here on as this mitigation comes into effect. Guidance will need to be revisited on face coverings ahead of go-live on 7 January.

Karen Pearson updated on compliance on public transport. Translink intend to take a more robust approach to enforcement on face coverings but will require additional staff to enforce. Aim is to increase compliance, rather than to prevent travel. Work will be undertaken to engage with disability sector.

**DfC**

No further updates on support schemes running currently. Any change in restrictions may require additional support/funding. Stressed the importance of liaison with DfE/DoF

**DE**

No change from last week. DE can respond quickly if it is decided that schools would be affected.

**DfE**

Further and Higher education sector can also react quickly.

**Workforce impact**

The impact of workforce absence on key services was discussed along with possible amendment to isolation period. Karen outlined thinking on general civil contingencies planning.