

EXECUTIVE COVID TASKFORCE

DRAFT MINUTES

21 DECEMBER 2021

Present: Jayne Brady (HOCS)
Denis McMahon (TEO)
Richard Pengelly (DoH)
Mike Brennan (DfE)
Tracy Meharg (DfC)
Peter May (DoJ)
Karen Pearson (TEO)
Peter Luney (TEO)
Jane Holmes (TEO)
John Smith (DE) (for Mark Browne)
David Malcolm (DfE) (For Mike Brennan)
Patricia McIntyre (TEO)
Name Redacted (TEO)

Apologies

1. Apologies were received from Mark Browne and Mike Brennan.

Protect

2. Richard updated the taskforce on the transmission of the Omicron variant and comparisons/ differentials with South Africa; hospital in-patient numbers and bed capacity.

HOCS

3. Jayne Brady outlined the position in other regions and likely mitigations which may be introduced post-Christmas; updated on the recent COBR meeting and available funding/current Treasury position. A further Ministerial meeting will take place today to discuss the current position with a view to arriving at a more settled position.

Draft Omicron response starting point – discussion paper

4. Peter Luney spoke to the paper circulated to the group which set out a suite of potential interventions and the associated impact of each on viral transmission in a variety of settings and events. These included, but were not limited to measures such as household mixing, workplace mitigations, face coverings and testing. Peter outlined engagements with various sectors and stakeholders and current reaction from each. Discussion also focused around the health, financial and political challenges around reaching an agreed

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position. Further work is ongoing separately around the practicalities and affordability of potential support schemes, the outworking of which will be set out in any 'final' proposals for Executive consideration. Mitigations in statute verses guidance was also discussed alongside the need for clarity on enforcement and realistic expectations around PSNI involvement.

5. John Smith advised of plans to seek support from retired teachers to bolster the teaching workforce.

Next steps

6. A further iteration of the paper circulated will be worked up ahead of the Ministerial meeting.

AOB

7. All matters were covered in the aforementioned business.