

EXECUTIVE COVID TASKFORCE
STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT BOARD
DRAFT MINUTES
17 DECEMBER 2021

Present: Jayne Brady (TEO) CHAIR
Denis McMahon (TEO)
Mike Brenna (DfE)
Peter May (DoJ)
Richard Pengelly (DoH)
Tracy Meharg (DfC)
Colum Boyle (DoF)
Bill Pauley (Dof)
Andrew Scott (DE)
Karen Pearson (TEO)
Peter Luney (TEO)
Jane Holmes (TEO)
Chris McNabb (TEO)
NR (TEO)

1. Executive meeting on 16 December

Peter Luney provided an overview of the meeting, the data presented and likely trajectory and severity of the Omicron variant. A number of interventions were discussed but noted that the potential for funding could hinder the deployment of various interventions. CMO/CSO indicated that there will be more data next week which would better inform next steps and a proportionate response. The aim for the next Executive meeting on 22 December to set out potential measures together with costings and societal and economic impact together with options around guidance and/or legislative interventions. The group noted the challenging financial position which would impact directly on the ability to deploy some interventions. HMT funding together with funding found from within will factor into any decision making.

2. Four Nations position

Karen Pearson updated the group on the current position across the UK in terms of both interventions and the number of cases, guidance and measures in statute.

3. Scenarios

Peter Luney discussed the likely higher risk settings which may require intervention on either a statutory or advisory basis. Testing, social distancing, large events, face coverings and enhancement of Covid certification were among the range of issues

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which could be considered. Any measures which may be mandated should be streamlined and communicated very clearly. Behavioral input should be a key consideration. It will be important factor in managing the situation as citizens are already voting with their feet in hospitality settings, for example. Workforce shortages may also play into plans. It will be key to have clarity on the outcome required when deploying any interventions. Health, economic and societal considerations will all play in. Financial reserves to support any interventions were again raised alongside the practicalities of deploying funding quickly and within correct accounting procedures. Support from the Audit Office was discussed.

4. HOCS

Jayne set out the likely timeline of events and next steps in the run up to next week's Executive meeting including scenarios, funding, communications and options for interventions and engagement with key sectors.