

**FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER**  
Diane Dodds MLA



**From: Diane Dodds MLA**  
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**To: EXECUTIVE COLLEAGUES**

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**UPDATE ON SAFER WORKPLACES AND EXECUTIVE PAPER – PARTIAL  
ECONOMIC RESTART**

This note provides an update on UK Government's Safer Workplaces workstream, and shares an Executive Paper on how we may consider a partial economic 'restart' with Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs) still in place.

**Safer Workplaces**

In my letter to Minister Swann on the "Amendments to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Northern Ireland) Regulations", issued on 17 April, I undertook to come back to the Executive colleagues on the progress of the Business Secretary's work on Safer Workplaces.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is preparing technical guidance on how businesses can reopen safely. The full suite of BEIS's Safer Workplaces guidance will include:

- Outdoor work: Work primarily undertaken outdoors or in open buildings (including infrastructure, energy and construction works, housebuilding, agriculture and fishing).
- Leisure and wellbeing services (including restaurant, pubs and other public and customer-facing activities).
- Non-food retail (including real estate and clothing).
- Indoor work undertaken in close proximity (such as office work, call centres, and laboratories).
- Factory and industry-based work (including manufacturing, food manufacturing and engineering).
- Distribution and logistics services (including transportation and storage).
- Working in others' homes.

There is simultaneous work being led by the Department for Transport (DfT) on the transport system, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) covering the high street and public spaces, and the Department for Education on the education system providing childcare for workers.

There are clear benefits to businesses and employees from having a single set of 'Safe Workplaces' guidance providing a clear and consistent message. UK Government Ministers have shown a preference for a 'Four Nations' approach to the guidance, and are currently considering how this could be delivered.

There is also a need for the Executive to match the UK Government's coordinated approach. For example, transport will be required for people to get to work, and people will need to feel safe to use it; schools will support the process for getting people back to work; and public spaces (e.g., car parks and high streets) will need to be made as safe as possible.

We can expect clarity from UK Government on their preferred approach and sight of the full guidance early next week. I will write to you again when BEIS's guidance is available.

### **Restarting the economy**

The Covid Regulations and wider communications narrative will have a fundamental influence on the application of any workplace guidance. While our decisions on both the regulations and communications will continue to be heavily guided by the health impacts of the pandemic, the pandemic will also cause severe social and economic damage. As such, action is required on both fronts to suppress the virus and mitigate the negative impact on livelihoods.

The attached Executive Paper outlines how the Executive may take action for a partial economic 'restart' with Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs) still in place. The paper recommends that 'stay safe' and 'work safe' messaging for the construction and manufacturing sector should be considered at the next review point, and a phased approach to relaxing the regulations for the retail sector is developed.

Yours sincerely

**Personal Data**

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