



FROM: NR

DATE: 22 January 2020

TO: 1. Bernie Rooney and Neill Jackson
2. Chris Stewart

TITLE Pandemic Influenza – Update on work required –
FOR INFORMATION

Recommendation: That you:

- Note the update on Pandemic Flu preparations that impact on TEO.

Background

1. I am a member of the Pandemic Flu sub group, a sub group of CCG (NI), chaired by Liz Redmond from the Department of Health. I also represent CCPB on the Pandemic Flu Readiness Board (PFRB) which is Chaired by Cabinet Office.
2. This morning meetings of both groups took place which I attended. This note provides an update on current work which impacts on CCPB that was discussed during these meetings.

Detail

Sector Resilience

3. CCPB was allocated responsibility for taking forward the sector resilience element of Pandemic flu preparations a few years ago. It is allocated to CCPB in the CCG (NI) Sector Resilience Programme. My understanding is that CCPB took this on as it is a non-health related issue. However, no work had commenced on it due to competing priorities and then the impact on staff

resources due to EU exit preparations. This has resulted in Northern Ireland being more than 18 months behind the rest of the United Kingdom in terms of ensuring sector resilience to any Pandemic flu outbreak. It is clear there is a pressing need to move this forward.

4. You are aware Civil Contingencies Policy Branch is currently understaffed. A business case setting out the need for additional staff, as well as a paper to the Departmental Board to increase the baseline for CCPB, is currently being drafted. Therefore there is limited resource to take forward this critical piece of work. I had previously advised Cabinet Office that we had hoped to complete this area of work by no later than June 2020, this date may need to be re-considered if resources cannot be made available to take the work forward.

Pandemic Flu exercise

5. At this morning's PFRB a paper on the proposals for a Pandemic flu exercise were discussed (attached for information at Annex A).
6. This has been agreed to take place in Spring 2020 and it was agreed at the meeting that it would not involve Ministers.
7. Liz Redmond, on behalf of the Pandemic Flu sub group advised that Northern Ireland's position had changed with the return of the Executive, and that given this and stretched resources, any input from Northern Ireland would need to be proportionate.
8. No decision has been made on whether it will be a table top or command-post exercise.
9. DoH will sit on the working group that the Cabinet Office are setting up and will report back to the Pandemic Flu Sub group with any actions we need to take forward. This will include issues such as whether CCG (NI) would be required to be involved, input into injects for the exercise etc. At this stage it is not known how much work this will involve.

Conclusion

10. CCPB are required to concentrate some of their limited resources on Pandemic flu work. The sector resilience work will be prioritised. A watching brief will be kept on the National exercise arrangements going forward however CCPB will be required to be involved in the Northern Ireland aspect of the exercise to some degree.

Recommendation

That you: Note the update on Pandemic Flu preparations that impact on TEO.

NR

Head of Civil Contingencies Policy Branch

Annex A



PFRB (20) 14 - Paper
8 - Exercising Paper F