

## EXECUTIVE OFFICE - OFFICIAL'S MEETING NOTE

TITLE/ORGANISATION:		TEO	
PURPOSE:		SoS Gove meeting with DAs – COVID-19 Situational Report and EU Exit	
DATE:	10 February 2022	NOTE WRITTEN BY:	Jane Holmes
Venue – Online			
LIST OF ATTENDEES:			
Michael Gove, SoS Mark Drakeford, WFM Nichola Sturgeon, SFM Jayne Brady, HOCS, NICS			
<b>KEY POINTS</b>			
<b>SoS</b> – welcome and introductions.			
<b>Alex Wilson, Covid Taskforce</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Overall data picture across the UK – increase in positivity can be seen</li><li>- Some signal in London that positivity has peaked, as in younger adults but not yet coming down</li><li>- Case rates per 100k and can see that Omicron is now dominant</li><li>- Hospital data – increases have been seen some indication that numbers are starting to decline in all jurisdictions</li><li>- In London, the number of patients being treated primarily for Covid has been relatively stable since mid-January</li><li>- Booster uptake good in run up to Christmas but can be seen flattening as perception that O is regarded as mild and may indicate people see there is less of a need to be boosted</li><li>- Evidence from ICU shows the majority of people there have not been vaccinated</li><li>- Can see a level of divergence between lagged cases and hospitalisations and between cases and deaths (unlike in New York)</li><li>- Mobility – can see a return to pre-Omicron levels which suggests we are not yet seeing to impact of increased mixing following the return to work and schools after festive period.</li></ul>			
<b>Kathy Hall, Covid Priorities</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Promote booster campaign</li><li>- Testing supply – end of confirmatory PCR in England and increasing LDD supply</li><li>- Travel arrangements re predeparture tests</li><li>- Self-isolation – release after 7<sup>th</sup> day on 2 -ve tests and reviewing if can be reduced to 5 full days with release on 6<sup>th</sup> day</li><li>- Plan B measures to be reviewed on 26 January so will continue to look at data in advance of that</li></ul>			
<b>SFM</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Access to free LFD tests – request that no decision will be made on that without full discussion</li></ul>			
<b>FM</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Helpful to know more about the change in self-isolation from 7 days to 5 and how likely this is to happen?</li><li>- Plan B review – when planning to lift measures, is it all measures or particular aspects and when could we have sight of this.</li></ul>			

**WFM**

- Reducing self-isolation – at 5 days 31% of population remain infectious – update on data?

**JM Kearney** – nothing at this stage**SoS**

- LfDs query – there are some concerns on overall costs (>£1bn per month) think this is money well spent but there will come a point in the future when testing will not be required at current intensity and there will have to be a discussion across the jurisdictions if there needs to be an adjustment to this policy

**Kathy Hall**

- Change in self-isolation is in practice a change of 24 hours. Right that 31% could still be infectious but when take tests, that reduces this (after one test this reduces to 12%; and to 6-7% after 2 tests) but assumes full compliance
- Plan B – regs sunset on 26<sup>th</sup> so will be working on this over the coming weeks and happy to keep officials up to date

**SoS** – agree that when decisions are being put to UKG on extension of Plan B measures, will keep DA colleagues informed.

**Tom Waite, DSO**

- The numbers outlined underscore the importance of testing

Workforce Pressures**Paymaster General**

- disruption by the O variant has been mostly controlled and is less than we have seen in previous peaks.
- Have been testing various levels of impact
  - Health – absence rates as of 89 Jan, approx. 8% of which 4% Covid related; 13 trusts have declared critical
  - Adult social care – 10% of which 3% Covid related. Previous winter peaks have been as high as 18%
  - Education - <0.1% closed; too early to see impact as schools just back
  - Transport – reduced services but nothing substantial to report
  - No major issues in emergency services.
- Continuing to monitor carefully and contingency plans are in place.
- Cross-cutting mitigations
  - provided 100k workers with LFD tests and reduced self-isolation arrangements.
  - Daily contact testing for fully vaccinated to help prevent widespread infections.
  - Adult social care - \$462m to support workforce recruitment and retention and further funds for local authorities
  - Health – digital staff passports; speeding up registration of overseas nurses and launched NHS reserves programme.
  - Transport – boosted number of HGV drivers; added £0.5m to support scheme and implemented flexibility for cabotage rights for hauliers
  - Education – asked qualified teachers no longer working in the profession to sign up to back fill absences

**SFM**

- Similar picture in Scotland and have modelled against a range of levels of absences
- Health, social care and in person teaching in schools biggest impacted
- Focus work with local authorities to maximise social care workforce
- Have a number of contingencies, some of which have been activated and have others in reserve

- The Covid related pressures and been added to already existing pressures and need to recognise that some of these issues are exacerbated by the deeper systemic issues

#### **WFM**

- Currently management but number of absences have not yet peaked

#### **FM**

- Managing within existing business models and modelling through our civil contingency arrangements

#### **JM Kearney**

- we are seeing some difficulties within private sector and outbreaks in certain workplace settings
- needs to be kept under continuous review under Covid contingency measures that have been set
- reinstated labour market engagement forum to help establish lists of essential workers, criteria for safe work conditions as navigate our way through Omicron
- seeing disproportionate impacts of community transmission in particular council areas and pattern emerging of a border corridor where seeing very high levels. This has an impact on public service in those areas. Looking at how we can introduce particular interventions in those areas.

**SoS** – point that SFM made about particular pressures in social care that existed before Covid and have relaxed migration arrangements to help address this. Would appreciate a discussion on that in this group at a later date.

**CDL** – the main issue from meetings is pockets of pressure and quality of data across the jurisdictions to help identify where the pinch points are.

#### **AOB**

- Intend to talk to relevant Ministers across DAs on funding pressures.
- Publishing conclusion of IGR tomorrow.

Thank you and good bye.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When decisions are being put to UKG on extension of Plan B measures, DA colleagues are to be informed.</li> </ul>	SoS Gove
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UKG/DA discussion on any changes in policy in relation to the use of LFD testing</li> </ul>	SoS Gove
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UKG/DA discussion on addressing workforce pressures that existed pre-Covid</li> </ul>	SoS Gove

Jane Holmes