

Civil Contingency Group (COVID-19 Response) Meeting
Thursday 2 April 2020

I&S

Note of Meeting

Attendees

David Sterling (Chair)
Arlene Foster – FM
Michelle O'Neill - dFM
Gordon Lyons – JM
Anthony Harbinson - TEO
Chris Stewart – TEO
Karen Pearson – TEO
Katrina Godfrey - DfI
Richard Pengelly – DoH
Mike Brennan - DfE
Denis McMahon – DAERA
David Small - DAERA
Peter May - DOJ
Sue Gray - DOF
Jill Minne – NICSHR
Derek Baker - DE
Tracy Meharg - DfC
Mark Hamilton – PSNI
Alan Todd - PSNI
Mark Deeney – NIFRS
Michael Graham - NIFRS
Michael Bloomfield - NIAS
Joan McCaffrey – Local Government
Stephen Reid – Local Government
Maria Jennings – Food Standards Agency
Mark Larmour – NIO
Chris McNabb – EIS
Hugh Widdis – DSO
Name Redacted – NIO
Lesley Hogg - NI Assembly
Donal Moran – NI Hub
NR – NI Hub
NR – NI Hub
NR – NI Hub – Note taker

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**
2. **COVID-19 - CURRENT SITUATION AND PROGNOSIS**

Daily statistics

- There have been 689 positive tests for COVID-19 with 30 deaths.
- The big development yesterday was the issue of the outcome of modelling exercise released into the public domain.
- The City, Altnagelvin and Ulster hospitals have been identified as COVID-19 hospitals. The Maze Long Kesh site may be used in the case of a second surge. The Royal Hospital will be the main non COVID-19 hospital.
- Issues identified with regards the relocation of staff to these hospitals. There are also logistical issues around PPE with arrangements being put in place.
- Paper on the Testing Strategy should be completed by the end of the week. Testing Capacity continues to be looked at with discussions ongoing with laboratories including Universities, Randox and other partners including Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI).

Action 1: (DoH) Testing strategy is to be finalised by the end of this week.

Action 2: DoJ to develop agreed proposals for testing key workers outside health and social care.

- A meeting with the devolved administrations later today to discuss prioritisation of testing to try reach a consensus on a shared approach. A draft paper on Prioritisation Criteria is being developed.
- Revised guidance on PPE could possibly issue today. Richard Pengelly advised that PPE was relatively cheap, so the focus should be on supply rather than cost. Alan Todd (PSNI) advised that a lack of PPE outside the Health Service was still an issue.

Action 3: DoF to feedback to the CCG tomorrow (3 April) details on procurement and supply PPE

3. **ACTIONS REVIEW**

- David Sterling progressed through the actions from the meeting of 1 April.

Financial difficulties for Ferries, Ports and Hauliers – ongoing

- DfI/DfE/DAERA/DoF/TEO working with DFT/NIO to ascertain direction of travel with this issue from UKG. A submission will be presented to the Executive tomorrow of this issue.

Action 4: DfI to clarify if NI will need to use Block Grant money immediately to address the freight/ferries/ports issues in advance of Whitehall intervention.

All departments to review the Scottish Bill and provide views on read across to NI to Chris Stewart.

- Still waiting on a number of responses around the Scottish Bill

NIO to ensure colleagues are aware of upcoming briefings on “Capacity in NHS hospitals”; and “Testing”.

- Data stream improving by the hour as new information becomes available. Nothing needs to be done immediately on this issue.

EIS and NIO to discuss the cross government public awareness campaign to ensure messaging is consistent.

- This issue has been resolved.

4. SIT-REP UPDATE

- Anthony Harbinson took the meeting through the main issues arising from yesterday's Sit-Rep which were as follows
 - The DoH modelling for the reasonable worst case scenario
 - Work being done by DfE and DfI around the supply chain including ports, ferries and hauliers
 - Furlough Workers – looking at the potential for these workers to be redeployed within the food processing area to keep the food supply chain going.

Action 5: DfE to obtain guidance from HMT and HMRC regarding furloughed workers taking up new secondary paid jobs.

- A significant number of schools have indicated that they will be staying open throughout the Easter holidays to cater for Key Workers' children. They have also received over 500 offers from volunteers to help out in the schools.

Action 6: DE to clarify which schools will be open over Easter holidays for children of key workers.

- HOCS advised that all announcements should go through the Hub before being put into the public domain.

Action 7: All Departments to ensure information is passed to DOCs in a timely manner so that NI Hub is aware of the information before public announcements are made.

5. LEGISLATION UPDATE

- Details of new legislation will be debated in the Assembly on 21 April 2020.
- NIO continue to monitor the position in England with regards to any new legislation likely to be introduced.

6. MEMBER UPDATES

No members reported any issuing requiring escalation to CCG.

In addition:

- PSNI raised concerns around PPE guidance and supplies going forward. Could be a significant issue for the PSNI.
- NIAS advised that Protocol 36 had been introduced across the UK. This will impact on how calls to the ambulance service are prioritised and responded to.
- DoF have held constructive talks with all three airports. A number of flights are continuing to operate from the airports at present.
- NIO advised that Testing was being ramped up this information would be fed into the NI-Hub. No further measures with regards to lockdown.
- DfC advised that paper was currently being produced in respect of vulnerable for Executive to consider.
- DAERA raised their concerns regarding freight and ports and labour supply, critical issues to the DAERA sector.

7. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

- Media were currently focusing on the following three issues:
 - PPE;
 - Field hospitals; and
 - Testing.
- It is planned to hold virtual press conferences from next week.

8. AOB AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Anthony advised that a 2nd Hub had been established in the Danske Building which was an important contingency measure. NI-Hub staff will now have the ability to work from home if required.

Date of next meeting

- 08:30, 3 April 2020,

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