

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

**Civil Contingency Group (COVID-19 Response) Meeting
Thursday 23 April 2020**

I&S

Note of Meeting

Attendees

David Sterling (Chair)
Arlene Foster - FM
Michelle O'Neill - dFM
Declan Kearney - JM
Gordon Lyons – JM
Derek Baker – DE
Michael Bloomfield – NIAS
Mike Brennan – DfE
Katrina Godfrey – DfI
Simon Byrne – PSNI
Alan Todd – PSNI
Lesley Hogg – NI Assembly
Maria Jennings – FSA
Mark Larmour – NIO
Peter May – DoJ
David Jackson – LG
Joan McCaffrey – LG
Chris McNabb – EIS
Denis McMahon – DAERA
Colum Boyle – DfC
Jill Minne – NICS HR
Michael Graham – NIFRS
Richard Pengelly – DoH
Karen Pearson – TEO
Chris Stewart – TEO
Hugh Widdis – DSO
NR – TEO
Andrew McCormick – TEO
Anthony Harbinson – TEO
Donal Moran – NI-Hub
Secretariat – NI Hub

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

2. COVID-19 - CURRENT SITUATION AND PROGNOSIS

Richard Pengelly (DoH) updated the meeting:

- To date there have been 2,874 confirmed cases in NI and 250 deaths.
- The dominant issue in the media had been the increase in the total number of deaths, up by 30 from the previous day. In reality only 8 of those deaths had occurred the day before.
- The difference was due to the surveillance reporting regime being reliant on data from a range of sources. The primary focus is trends over time not figures on a specific day. The 3-day and 5-day trends are downwards despite fluctuations in the daily numbers. Work was ongoing with the Trusts to try to accelerate the provision of information and minimise the data lag but it was recognised that it would not be possible to eliminate data lag.
- He noted that the issue was not unique to NI with RoI showing a jump of 77 deaths on 20 April but the CMO later tweeting to clarify that only 8 of those deaths had occurred the day before.
- Although the current trends were downwards it was vital that this information was managed carefully to avoid the potential for public complacency.

3. ACTIONS REVIEW

David Sterling advised that there were currently 10 live actions, some of which are related. He also recommended closing two actions as follows:

- **CCG1704/01 – Household Recycling Centres** – DAERA Minister intends to issue guidance in the next few days.
Update: Denis McMahon advised that the Strategic Waste Management Group met yesterday to agree the principles to be applied and guidance will be issued thereafter. DAERA Minister will copy the guidance to Executive colleagues. – **Action to be closed once guidance issued.**
- **CCG/056 (raised 01/04/20) – Ferries, Ports and Haulage** – This was a wide ranging action regarding the viability of ferries, ports and haulage. The action has in effect been superseded by CCG0904/04 and closure will rationalise the action and reduce the need for duplicate updates.
Update: The Finance Minister had notified the Executive that money will be routed to the CoDA. DoF and DfI will work together to finalise the funding route – **Action to be closed.**

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

David Sterling requested updates on the following actions:

- **CCG2104/01 – Local Council Enforcement Powers** – Discussions to take place today with Chris Stewart, DSO, local councils and PSNI.
Update: David Jackson (LG) advised that he had discussed the issue with PSNI and SOLACE and a way forward has been agreed. A few minor issues to be discussed with Chris Stewart (TEO) today and the final paper will be put to the Executive.
- **CCG1304/02 – Regulations (Travel to take exercise)** – Chris Stewart (TEO) advised that following constructive discussions with the Attorney General and PSNI it was felt that the issues could be resolved satisfactorily within the next 24-36 hours. Proposals will be presented to the Executive.

David Sterling further advised that the following priority decision from yesterday's SitRep had been added to the Hub action log:

- **SITREP027/P&C/01 – Student Hardship** – DfE has raised the Student Hardship issue as a priority decision in the SitRep.
Update: Mike Brennan (DfE) advised that he had met with representatives of student organisations who had raised their concerns around student hardship. He advised that £2.5m had already been earmarked but a further £2m may be required.

4. SIT-REP UPDATE

Anthony Harbinson took the meeting through the main issues arising from yesterday's Sit-Rep including:

- Minister Swann has extended testing to include additional frontline workers and symptomatic members of their households.
- The previously reported potential risk of service failure in care homes due to staffing pressures has been resolved; the HSC now has a pool of staff able to provide assistance to care homes in the event of future staffing pressures.
- Minister Mallon stated that Translink is adapting its weekend local bus services to cater for essential workers who need to travel.
- COVID-19 emergency instruction contingency plan notification sent to approved meat operators in NI by FSA.
Update: Maria Jennings (FSA) advised that there were no current issues and this action had been taken to provide assurance to the meat operators. Denis McMahon (DAERA) advised that there was no immediate concerns within this sector at present with only an 8% absentee rate.
- The BBC is this week launching an education package across TV and online helping to keep children learning and supporting parents.

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

- Community Response Plan issued by Minister Hargey setting out how DfC will support grassroots community organisations.

5. LEGISLATION UPDATE

- Chris Stewart advised that there was nothing further to add to the earlier discussion under the actions.

6. MEMBER UPDATES

- Alan Todd (PSNI) – asked that consideration be given to restrictions in movement when any proposed relaxations of rules are being considered.
- Mark Larmour (NIO) – noted the pending announcement on ferries and airports and it emerged that further discussions were required to seek clarity on arrangements and timing.

Action CCG2304/01: Katrina Godfrey (DfI), Mark Larmour (NIO) and Chris McNabb (TEO EIS) to discuss the timing and arrangements around the announcement of support for ferries, ports and airports after the CCG meeting.

- Denis McMahon (DAERA) – noted reports from the supermarkets that the market had swung from some of the highest demand to some of the lowest demand in years.

7. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

- Chris McNabb (EIS) advised that there was nothing further to add to the earlier discussion under the actions.

8. AOB AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of next meeting: 08:30, 24 April 2020

I&S

I&S