

Note for the Record -

Thursday 30 April 2020 via Zoom

In attendance

SofS NI

FM and dFM

Minister for Health

Tánaiste

Irish Health Minister

1. Minister Swann provided as overview of the current position. There had been 9 more deaths today. Overall, this indicated that there had been a slight decrease in numbers. He thanked the Tánaiste for sharing the data and work on developing apps. He also noted that a review of Regulations is due next week.
2. The SofS asked how the Memorandum of Understanding is working.
3. Minister Swann advised that the document was a formalisation of what was actually happening on the ground. There has been significant positive liaison was already well ongoing.
4. Minister for Health, Simon Harris thanked Minister Swann and DoH for the joint working and strong working relationships.
5. It was noted that reduction in the R number was very encouraging and currently at 2 – 2.5 percent. Approximately 100 people were being admitted to hospitals on a daily basis to 40 and demand for ICU beds is dropping. There had been a huge amount of work going into breaking chains and healthcare staff being accommodated. There was also a massive effort to test asymptotic.

Looking ahead roadmap

6. There was a need to look at both plan and pace. This included a need to work through the plan at an appropriate pace. Not likely to see significant easing of restrictions. Taoiseach will announce the roadmap tomorrow. Not a linear progression 2-4 week gaps between phases, it will be made clear that it may have to be reconsidered at time and it may be that the plan may half and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.
7. The Tánaiste cautioned that the situation needs to be monitored very carefully as there may be a high risk of the disease outbreak again. Until a vaccine can be found and that may be some time, it requires a cautious approach. He also welcomed that officials are working together.

8. Charlie Flanagan explained that he would be speaking to Minister Long later today to discuss how to grow border co- operation with PSNI and Gardi.
9. The SofS advised that PM is doing UKG meeting today and reiterated the information points positive trends. He continued that consistently increasing traffic indicating that people are moving during the lockdown this should not be the case. He mentioned that some of the businesses that can should be working safely but that caution is still required.
10. The FM said that in terms of co- operation by the health ministers has been welcomed. DoH officials working together is to be commended. She advised that conversations were happening at Executive about a roadmap and engaging with UKG re plan - expects that there will be a COBR. Engagement has been very good, helpful and appropriate and commended the approach.
11. The dFM welcomed the positive trends in the reduction of cases and deaths. She mentioned the public fatigue and acknowledged that whilst Ministers can't provide clarity yet there was a need to provide communications.
12. The dFM mentioned that it is important to work together in a collaborative way and maintain consistency in so far as possible. Important to align messages across the island of Ireland and welcomed that fact that Minister ?
13. dFM advised that very help letters from IBec and CBI setting out the economy issues and looked forward to meeting.
14. SofS advised that a meeting re airports was ongoing. As of yet no final decisions had been made but he agreed to keep Ministers informed. An announcement was expected next week. He also said that the Cabinet met this morning for a couple of hours an again had not yet made a decision.
15. FM asked about international passengers coming into Dublin and what actions or activities are underway.
16. The Tánaiste advised that if UKG are making a decision next week that would be helpful. He provide an updated on the current government requirements from passengers and stated that approx 300 -600 people per day, which was approx 1 percent.
17. The government was currently collecting data on where they were coming from and where they were going to stay? This was not underpinned by any legal base but the Attorney General for Ireland was working up a legislative proposal to put in place a legal requirement for individuals to socially isolate for a period of 14 days.
18. Up until now the request has been to self-quarantine however the Tánaiste advised that he felt it was an issue that needed to be enhanced and on a legal basis. The preferred position is to have forms complete on line prior to coming into Ireland. Overall there is an 87 percent compliance rate with no real

resistance from passengers. Ireland is working towards having the legislative and administrative arrangements in place next week.

19. Tánaiste advised that Ireland is trying to create circumstances where people can fly into Belfast to avoid the self-isolation. Find a loop in the process. Would welcome co-ordination between two systems to prevent back door options to avoid spread.
20. FM mentioned that this weekend is a bank holiday weekend and there is a genuine fear around visitors crossing the border to shop or visit venues. The Chief Constable is joining FM and dFM at their press conference tomorrow and that there are intending to deliver strong message re holiday weekend.
21. It was noted that Charlie and Naomi would be speaking later on today and FM wished to speak to Naomi in advance to ask her to raise the issue.
22. Tánaiste advised that it is important that both jurisdictions do not get into a blame game. There is a need to ensure that anxiety and fear of the public needs to be managed.
23. FM mentioned that in her constituency, Fermanagh that is becoming more and more of an issue.
24. Simon Harris advised that the Ireland Chief Medical Officer stated publically that traffic in Cavan and Monaghan is not as a result of people travelling from the North. He said that NI and ROI both have restrictions in place and that conversations are similar in the ROI. He supported that the PSNI and Garda working together.
25. DFM welcomed the conversation with Minister Long and Charlie. She said that she felt that it is important that as much engagement as possible should take place.
26. Tánaiste mentioned that the POI announcement spacing of three week intervals will make provision for careful consideration in his view of the possibility of easing major restrictions is minimal.
27. He suggested that the health, nio and to consider areas of alignment might be possible would be helpful and important to avoid deviations that may encourage cross border traffic – some of which may be people getting to work.
28. PM will outline a direction of travel today.
29. SofS advised that approximately 100,000 people per week were coming into the UK per week at present. Considering the need to bring forward legislation in relation to travel and will make a decision within the next week on legislative requirements, Agreed it would be helpful to liaise on these issues and highlighted that it is key , where there are differences that Ministers know what they are and understand them and rationale.

30. Minister Harris pointed out that from a geographical perspective there is a real challenge of spreading the virus public health issue. The public health issue must be at the forefront of all considerations.
31. Tánaiste advised that movement through airports for critical services and supply chains needs to continue. And Ports as a east / west business link is the one link that is working without subsidy as it is deemed commercially viable. This will need to be continued to be monitored and if the situation is likely to change it will be carefully considered.
32. It is important that Ministers, CMOs and officials continue to engage and really need to stop the blame game.
33. Unwinding of restrictions will need to be carefully managed. A lot of cross border traffic could emerge and the public health advice must be the priority and the public health advice should help inform the alignment of restrictions in so far as practically possible.