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**FROM: KAREN PEARSON**  
**DATE: 30 OCTOBER 2020**  
**TO: FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER**  
**SUBJECT: COVID 19: EXIT STRATEGY**

**Issue:** **This submission:**

- **Sets out the context in which decisions will be taken;**
- **Proposes a framework for decision making; and**
- **Makes proposals for steps the Executive could be invited to take in week three, to encourage a culture of compliance.**

**Timescale:** **IMMEDIATE - For discussion at the Executive meeting on Tuesday 3 November.**

**Press Office Advice:** **This issue of how restrictions will be managed post the four week intervention period is of significant interest to the media and wider society. Timely communication of the Executive's intended approach would be beneficial in securing support through clear messaging.**

**FOI Implications:** **Potentially disclosable.**

**Financial Implications:** **None**

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Legislative Implications:</b> | <b>This relates to amendments to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.</b>  |
| <b>Executive Referral:</b>       | <b>The way forward will require Executive approval.</b>   |
| <b>Recommendation:</b>           | <b>That the First Minister and deputy First Minister:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Note the context in which decisions will be taken;</b></li> <li>- <b>Adopts the framework for decision making; and</b></li> <li>- <b>Advise officials on way forward for Executive clearance on proposals.</b></li> </ul> |

## **Background**

1. First Minister and deputy First Minister might find it helpful to review the decisions to date, which are summarized in the graphic at **Annex A**.
2. As of today, the key health indicators are:
  - positive test cases: 566
  - hospitalisations: 354
  - occupancy: 97%
  - ICU available: 14
  - active care home outbreaks: 109
  - deaths: 8
3. The Executive considered the “R” paper yesterday which modelled the position at the end of the four weeks of restrictions. The estimate is that there will be around 500 positive test cases per day at that point. The last time the positive test cases were at 500 per day was on 10 October. The number of hospital inpatients at the

end of the four weeks is currently estimated to be around 300. The peak in wave 1 was 322 on 8 April. There continues to be a rise in the number of positive test cases in the over 60s group. Other indications are that restrictions (including those made on 16 October) have had an impact.

4. The current restrictions are also having a negative impact on the economy and family life. The restrictions impact:
  - domestic settings
  - sport and leisure
  - hospitality
  - close contact economy
  - indoor cultural settings
  - limitations on numbers attending weddings and funerals
  - restrictions on large gatherings
  - restrictions on meeting in private dwellings
5. Legal challenges are being mounted by some sectors including close contact economy and music.
6. The restrictions (domestic settings and the 16 October package) were designed to halt the progression of the virus and to create some headroom to avoid the HSC becoming overwhelmed. The case doubling rate was such that doing nothing was not an option. The Executive's decision was informed also by the impacts on the economy and citizens. Minister Swann's paper to the Executive on 11 October sets out the full health context in which the restrictions were progressed.

#### **Framework for decision making**

7. CCGNI has been stood up with effect from 28 October. Officials have brigaded existing work into three broad workstreams:

- **Strategy.** This group is cross departmental and is overseeing the advice to Ministers on the Exit Strategy and more broadly on Autumn and Winter planning. This group is developing an overall plan for the Christmas period. Beneath this group, a cross Departmental group of officials, PSNI and local government will continue to meet weekly to maximize information sharing;
  - **Communications and Culture of Compliance.** This group brigades the existing comms work, additional comms activities and support to the Junior Ministers in their strategic engagements; and
  - **Legislation.** This group brings together DoH and TEO, as before.
8. In addition, DoF will continue to oversee financial allocations and will need to work closely with DfE, DfC and DoH.
9. For the Executive's decision making on restrictions, officials are mindful that restrictions affect individuals, families, businesses and communities. We therefore propose a decision making framework which builds in consideration of impacts as well as health advice, and which is mindful of rights, vulnerable people and the risk of legal challenge.
10. Other jurisdictions have adopted a tiered approach which has some good benefits in terms of simplicity and ease of communication. Downsides are however apparent in other jurisdictions, the main issue being when a tier does not entirely suit the prevailing circumstances.
11. The Executive's approach to decision making over the summer, when restrictions were being lifted, worked because it was flexible and the steps through it were laid out in the Approach to Decision Making published on 12 May. Flexibility may be the best strategic option at this point and the model outlined in **Annex B** is offered for consideration.

12. In summary, the process would start in the Strategy Group with officials from all relevant Departments providing a constructive challenge function alongside the health proposals. This would help ensure that the Executive's discussions and decisions are informed by the fullest range of impacts.
13. The Executive would remain of course the decision making body and would want updates on how the restrictions are playing out between decision points.
14. This model can be put in place next week to assist the decision making required for the end of the current restrictions. The challenge function would begin by examining the restrictions that were in place on 15 October (not including Derry City and Strabane) from which some additional restrictions and freedoms will be considered.

### **Culture of compliance**

15. Minister Swann's 11 October paper also noted the need to increase compliance with restrictions and the basics of the public health advice. Work has been taken forward over the first two weeks including:
- Junior Ministers' engagements with retail and hospitality sectors, and faiths leaders; and
  - Further development of the public information campaign, and close working with sectors, local government and PSNI.
16. Minister Swann wrote to the First Minister and deputy First Minister yesterday outlining some steps which could be incorporated into an Exit strategy. Most are aimed at increasing and supporting individual responsibility and compliance and this will play a role in mitigating the transmission of the virus. On their own, these steps will not be sufficient and some form of restrictions will be needed, as outlined above.

17. Some of the proposals will require more work before the Executive can consider a package of restrictions towards the end of week 3 or very early in week 4. Some can however move forward now especially those which assist with adherence (adherence being the term preferred by behavioral scientists in recent weeks). For example:

- **Paragraph 19** of Minister Swann's paper recommends the establishment of a cross departmental Adherence Group including PHA, community representatives and academics. If approved this would build on and support the work Junior Ministers are progressing at a strategic level and as such could be led by **TEO**;
- **Paragraph 20** proposes community networks and community champions, and it is recommended that **DfC** take the lead, building on the work undertaken in the response phase. Officials have been discussing similar community based communications with DfC colleagues, including how best to communicate with those who are considering a test, or who have been asked to self-isolate, to make sure there is wrap around support at all stages. This needs to include making sure that lower paid citizens are pointed to existing financial support very early in their decision making process;
- **Paragraph 23** recommends that the **Strategic Compliance Group** considers making it a legal requirement to self-isolate when instructed. This would need careful consideration as the objective at this time has to be to bring people with us and the Executive would need to weigh up whether this would be beneficial or a barrier to adherence with testing and self-isolation.

18. The paper also notes the programme of work to review the test trace and protect service. We understand that Minister Swann will submit a paper to the Executive next week. The paper also notes the impact on HSC capacity and the case

number and admissions rise which will follow the lifting of restrictions even with the above additional measures.

### **Exit strategy**

**19.** We have drafted a paper for the Executive which is at **Annex C**. It is written with publication in mind and it draws together the proposals in Minister Swann's paper and the draft decision making framework outlined above.

**20.** If First Minister and deputy First Minister are content to propose, and if the Executive agrees, we advise on the following next steps:

- Executive considers the Exit Strategy on Tuesday 3 November
- The Exit Strategy is published
- Officials progress the proposals on adherence measures outlined above
- The Strategy Group meets early next week to develop options for the Executive to consider for restrictions at the end of this four week period
- The Executive discusses restrictions options on Thursday 5 November
- Final consideration of restrictions, if needed, early in week beginning 9 November
- Handling plan for sectoral and political engagement to be produced for week beginning 9 November
- Regulations made and in force at midnight on 12 November, with restrictions in place for 13 November

### **Recommendation**

**21.** That the First Minister and deputy First Minister:

- **Note the context in which decisions will be taken;**
- **Adopts the framework for decision making; and**
- **Advise officials on way forward for Executive clearance on proposals.**

**KAREN PEARSON**

**Ext:** Irrelevant & Sensitive



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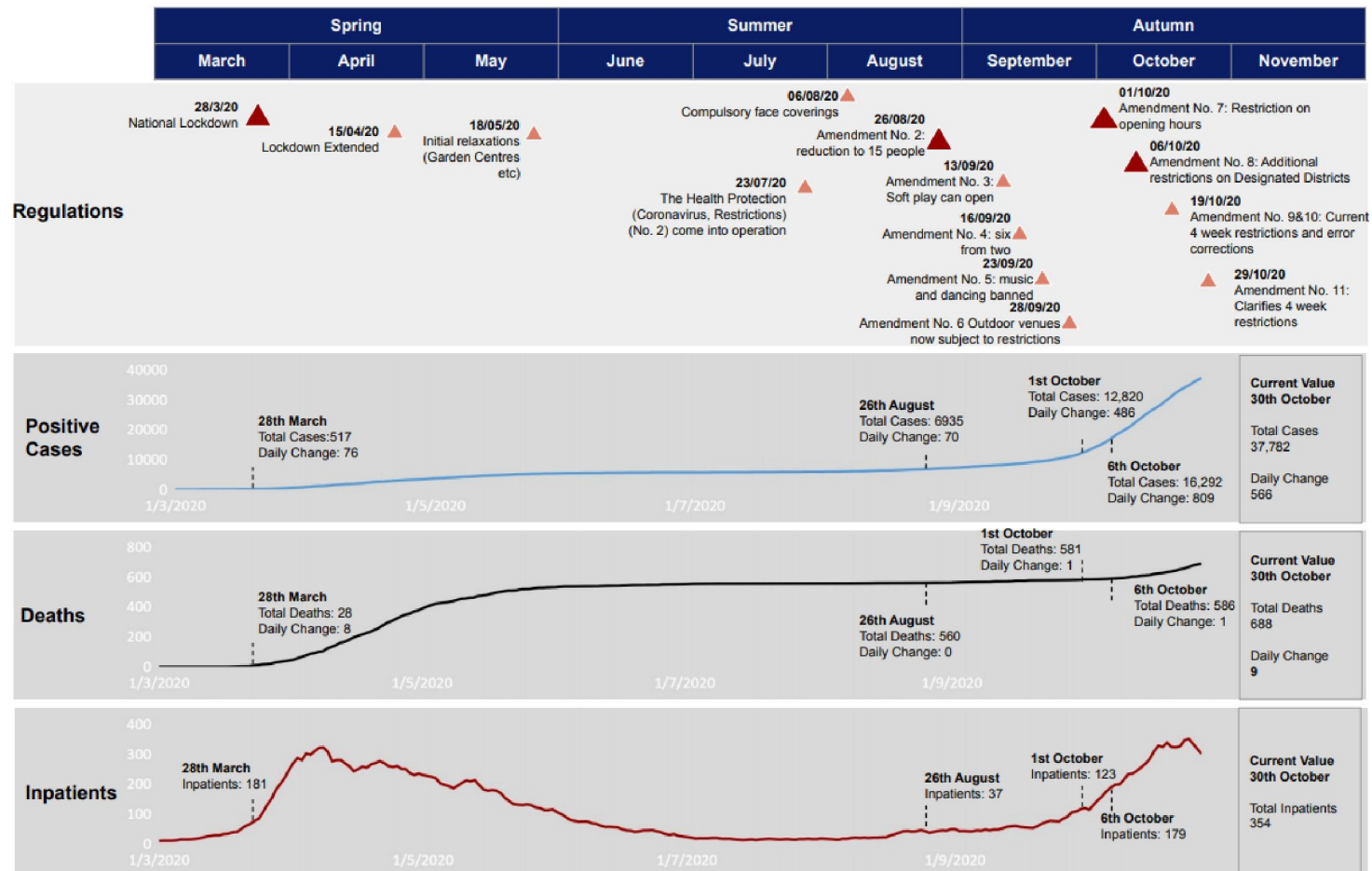
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TEO Press Office

## Coronavirus Regulations Timeline





# **COVID-19 Restrictions**

## **Strategic Planning Framework**

*October 2020*

## Executive Summary

This paper sets out a proposed methodology for the management of restrictions at the end of the current four week restriction event due to end midnight Thursday 12th November 2020.

It is proposed that the Strategy Group will continually monitor key health, societal and economic indicators along with compliance metrics to analyse and determine trends to help facilitate data driven decision making at the Executive level.

Critical checkpoint dates within the winter timeline have been suggested. Maintaining these checkpoints, with the corresponding specialist analysis and advice, is vital in enabling relaxations in parallel with key periods (late 2020/early 2021).

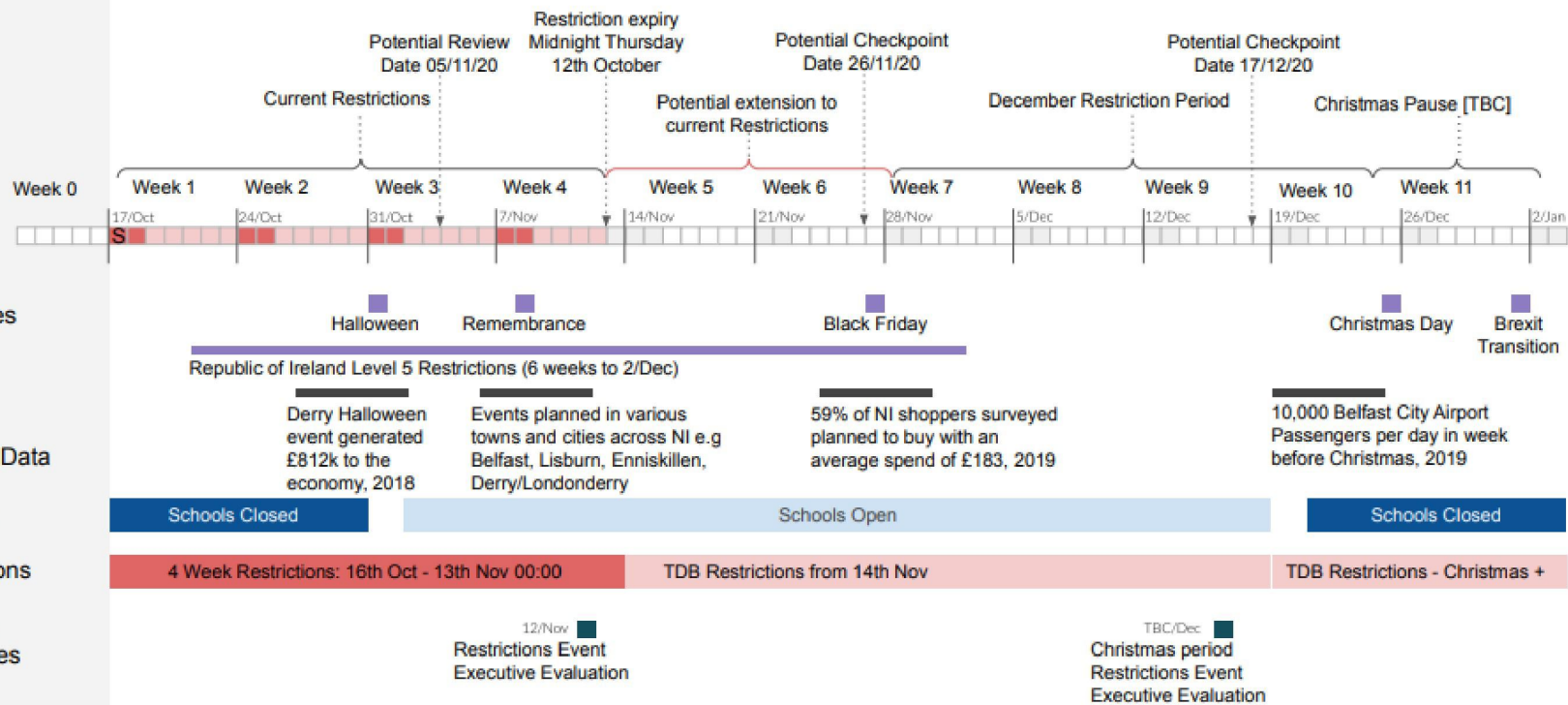
All options prepared in advance of checkpoints will be guided by an agreed set of COVID related indicators and target values, along with a relevant analysis as to how the chosen options will impact economic and societal aspects of a citizen's life. Agreed options will be used as the basis of new regulations and laid with supporting guidance as appropriate.

## Strategic Planning Framework



## Strategic Planning Framework: Autumn - Winter Timeline

The timeline below details key events in the run up to Christmas and the New Year.

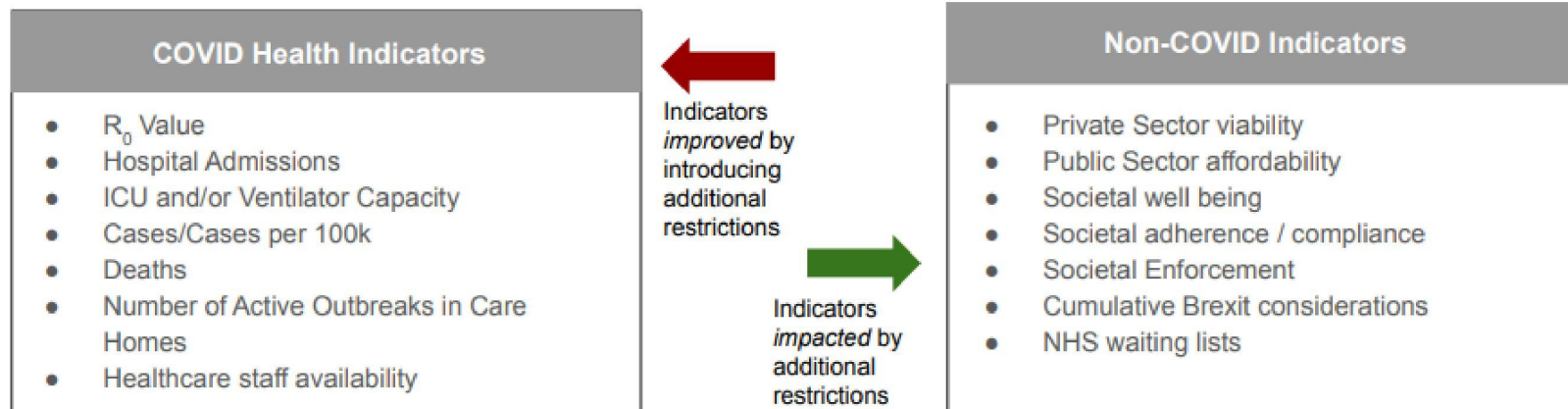




The following are to be established prior to the Restriction Event regulations commencing:

1. A well defined *intent* that describes the restriction event, its purpose and the target outcome
2. The duration of the restriction event (and locations if applicable) is to be clearly defined along with the initial checkpoint review date
3. Key COVID health indicators are required in order to monitor the success of the restriction event
4. Other economic, societal, community and compliance indicators are to be identified for monitoring during the restriction event
5. All indicators are to be baselined to allow tracking and analysis during the restriction event
6. Regulations, Guidance and complementary strategies are to be reviewed with associated communications in place

Example indicators to be prioritised and baselined prior to initiating the Restriction Event:



## Framework Stage **2** Monitor & Analyse

Targets and indicators will be continually monitored and analysed during the restriction event. A clear understanding of the current situation will be generated by analysing data from cross departmental groups (including PHA data), and considered / refined at the Strategy Group and CCG (NI) as appropriate.

Additional data and analysis will be fed into CCG (NI) via a weekly SitRep including compliance indicators and key trends.

The Strategy Group will finalise the position before checkpoint dates that will facilitate regulatory change discussions at the Strategy Group. An understanding of the agreed position will be disseminated to CCG (NI) and the Executive.

### Example Inputs for Analysis



| NON-PHARMACEUTICAL OPTIONS   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Measures relating to personal contacts</b><br>Options outlined below:<br>a) Stay at home order ("lockdown") – very high impact<br>b) Planned, short stay at home order ("circuit breaker") – moderate impact<br>c) Reducing contacts between members of different households within the home – moderate impact<br>d) Restrictions on outdoor gatherings and prohibiting large events – low impact |  |
| <b>Intervention</b>  | Stay at home order ("lockdown"). Closure of leisure and hospitality sectors as well as non-essential retail. Only essential workers permitted to attend workplace. Schools closed for key workers and vulnerable children, colleges and universities shut. Places of worship shut. Contact within other households limited.  |
| <b>Impact on COVID transmission</b>  | Very high impact. Reduction of R0 from around 2.2 to around 0.6 post "lockdown" in rest of the UK (i.e. roughly 75% reduction). High confidence.   |
| <b>Impact on COVID deaths and serious illness</b>  | Very high. Double and severe disease were reduced by stay-at-home orders, through reduction in transmission. High confidence.  |
| <b>Non-COVID impact (social, psychological, economic)</b>  | Large impact on health and wellbeing. High confidence. Impacts of lockdown on social isolation and mental health, worse for those with existing conditions, older people and BAME communities. Future lockdowns could occur in colder weather which could lead to more isolation and more mental health problems. School closures associated with possible increases in school drop out, child injury, domestic violence, child abuse but reductions in referrals. Reductions in social interaction erode social development and harm general wellbeing and mental health of children and parents. Risk of division and anger in community if education of |



## Framework Stage **3** Relax / Restrict Checkpoint

The Strategy Group will be made up of representatives from all departments and will be responsible for the development of options for consideration at the Executive level. Based on a wide range of inputs (e.g. indicators, health advice, the Sitrep, departmental representation etc.) the Strategy Group will then be able to provide evidence based options for the management of regulations at agreed review dates.



### Potential example 'exit strategies' based on evidence provided

#### Scenario 1 - Health Indicators allow for some restrictions to be lifted

- Minimal relaxations
- Phased (i.e. staggered) return to September restriction levels
- Evidence led relaxations
- Prioritised Economic & Societal relaxations

#### Scenario 2 - Limited improvement of Health Indicators

- Extend as-is restrictions that are currently in place
- Evidence led restrictions

#### Scenario 3 - Further interventions required to Health Indicators

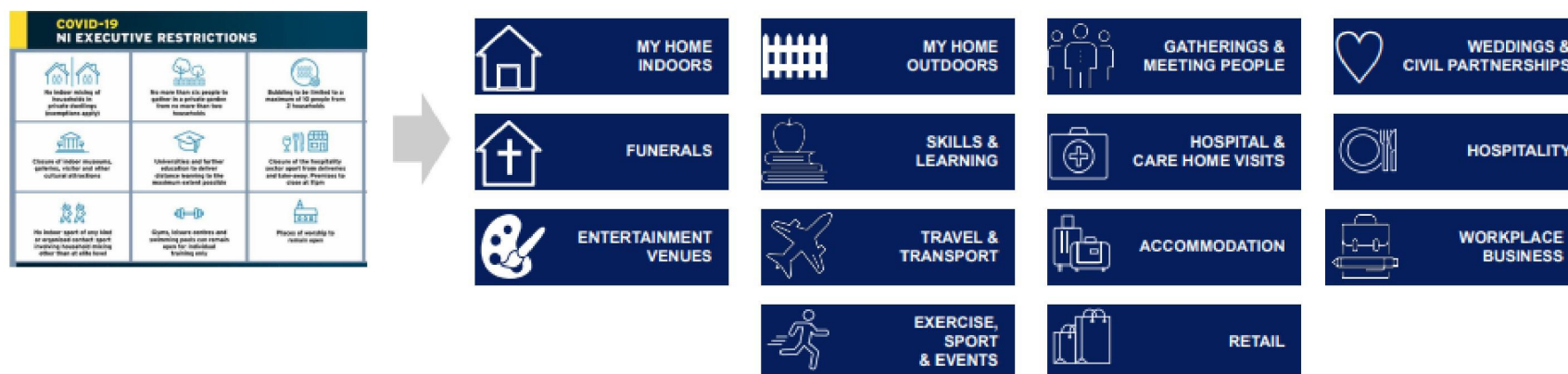
- Introduce wider/tighter restrictions than those already in place
- Return to National restrictions that were in place as of 28/03

## Framework Stage **4** Restriction Event Defined








After establishing a clear understanding of the current status of COVID Health and Non-COVID Health indicators, a strategic direction will be taken to manage the current restrictions.

The tiles outlined in the following slides have been grouped by common themes (presented below) and present the range of restriction options available. These options are either currently in operation, have been activated previously or are additional measures suggested by CMO and CSA for inclusion within this paper. The options range in severity and should be viewed in line with health, economic and societal indicators within the Strategic Planning Framework presented above.








The themes used in the development of future restriction events are consistent with the public facing themes presented on NI Direct.



## Range of Restriction Options (1 of 2)

|  |  |  |   |   |   |  | Key  |   |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|
|  |  |  |   |   |   |  | Indicates additional restriction options   | Indicates current position as of 30/10/2020 |
|  |  |  |   |   |   |  | Additional measures suggested by CMO & CSA   |   |
| Themes   | Less restrictive → More restrictive                                |  |   |   |   |  | Additional Comments  |   |
|  <b>MY HOME INDOORS</b>                   | 10 from up to 4 households   | 6 from 2 households  | 6 from 2 linked households                                | No mixing indoors   | Visits with a single person linked household only | Stay at home<br>No visiting second homes | Approaching Winter season where indoor gatherings in private dwellings are likely              |   |
|  <b>MY HOME OUTDOORS</b>                  | 30 from any number of households (incl. children)                  | 15 from any number of households (incl. children)                      | 6 from 2 households                                       |   |   |  | Approaching Winter season where outdoor gatherings in private dwellings are unlikely           |   |
|  <b>GATHERINGS &amp; MEETING PEOPLE</b>   | ≥ 30 allowed where risk assessed by organiser                      | ≥ 15 allowed where risk assessed by organiser                          | >15 not permitted   | >2 people prohibited unless under exceptional circumstances |   |  | May need to be viewed in conjunction with hospitality as this could overlap with group dinners |   |
|  <b>WEDDINGS &amp; CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS</b> | Number of guests limited by venue risk assessment only             | Max 10 people per table (excl. Top table & children aged 12 and under) | ≤10 can attend a wedding in a private dwelling            | ≤ 25 people can attend a wedding. No reception allowed.     | Marriage in exceptional circumstances             |  | May need to be viewed in conjunction with accommodation as some are wedding venues             |   |
|  <b>FUNERALS</b>                          | Number of guests at funerals limited by venue risk assessment only | No pre or post funeral activities                                      | ≤ 25 people can attend                                    | Funeral attendance for immediate family                     |   |  | Should be viewed in line with Weddings & Civil Partnerships to ensure no disparity             |   |
|  <b>SKILLS &amp; LEARNING</b>           | Schools open   | Alternative week-on week-off with half class sizes                     | Blended approach of distance and classroom-based learning | Distance learning in place                                  |   |  | Provide guidance on how to swap classroom air for fresh air every 20 minutes                   |   |
|  <b>HOSPITAL &amp; CARE HOME VISITS</b> | Visits to care homes and hospitals permitted                       | No visits permitted to hospitals / care homes                          |   |   |   |  | Can be determined by local trust / care home provider  |   |

## Range of Restriction Options (2 of 2)

|   |  |                                      |  |                          |   |                                    |   |                                    |        | Key   |   |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--------|---|---|
|   |  |                                      |  |                          |   |                                    |   |                                    |        | Indicates additional restriction options  | Indicates current position as of 30/10/2020 |
| Themes  | Less restrictive → More restrictive                            |                                      |  |                          |   |                                    |   |                                    |        | Additional Comments   |   |
|  <b>HOSPITALITY</b>                    | Restaurant / pubs open<br>Table service only<br>No table limit | Max. of 6 per table                  | 11pm closing time  | Outdoor dining permitted | Outdoor drinking only   | QR code to record personal details | Mandatory recording of seating position             | Takeaway dining only               | Closed | Advanced warning required to order/cancel stock   |   |
|  <b>ENTERTAINMENT VENUES</b>           | Cinemas open<br>Concerts & Theatres for rehearsal/recording    | No live music                        | No dancing   |                          | Background music only where food/drink is served                  |                                    | Indoor recreation closed                            | Indoor & Outdoor recreation closed |        | Typical uptake in Christmas events require advance notice for go ahead/cancellations        |   |
|  <b>TRAVEL &amp; TRANSPORT</b>         | Quarantine when arriving from international destinations       | Avoid travel outside local area      | Necessary travel only                                    |                          | Actively discourage car sharing with people from other households |                                    | No travel between University & home excl. Christmas |                                    |        | In addition to keep windows partially open when car sharing                                 |   |
|  <b>ACCOMMODATION</b>                  | Open to public   | Open to residents and wedding guests | Open to critical workers only                            |                          |   |                                    |   |                                    |        | Travel into NI to spend time with friends and family requires accommodation to be available |   |
|  <b>WORKPLACE BUSINESS</b>             | Conference facilities open                                     | Phased return to office              | Work from home if possible                               |                          |   |                                    |   |                                    |        | Has remained constant throughout restriction and relaxation cycles                          |   |
|  <b>EXERCISE, SPORT &amp; EVENTS</b> | Arena's with capacity of <5,000 open                           | Spectators permitted                 | Risk assessment to determine relevant participant number |                          | 15 participants outdoor non contact                               |                                    | No spectators permitted                             | No sport permitted incl. elite     |        | As Winter approaches, many sports look to move indoors to continue participation            |   |
|  <b>RETAIL</b>                       | Essential & Non Essential Open                                 | Close contact appointment only       | Close contact services closed                            |                          | Non Essential Closed  |                                    |   |                                    |        | November and December typically contain the five busiest shopping days of the year          |   |

**Stay safe:**

**The Executive's Framework for Covid 19,  
Autumn and Winter planning**

## **1. Executive summary**

This has been the most difficult year for us all. Covid 19 remains with us and unfortunately that will be the case until vaccines and therapeutics are widely available. The Executive will do all it can to avoid a series of significant restrictions such as the ones in place now. This will require renewed effort. Covid is in our community. It passes between us but there are steps we can all take. Managing to live with Covid in our community will require commitment and compliance with the basics of the public health messaging.

Facing into the Autumn and Winter, it is vital that we work together to control the transmission of Covid as much as possible. As everyone can see, this is not easy but there are things we can all do together. The Executive is very grateful to everyone who has played a role in this so far, for the steps you have taken and we understand how difficult this has been.

Lockdown in March affected us all and some of us have lost loved ones to Covid and other illnesses. Some businesses have been badly affected and that continues to be the case. Over the Summer months, the low transmission rates here enabled us to lift some restrictions and we know it was good to be able to see friends and family and to get back to some of our cherished ways of living, and to get back to economic activity.

Like many places around the world, we are seeing increased transmission rates. Covid rates are very high here. This is upsetting for us all. And more than that, there are serious impacts for our health service. As we saw in the March lockdown, it is increasingly necessary to divert precious resources to Covid 19 management. This is of great concern to everyone including patients who are ill with other conditions and to the entire health system.

So, the Executive has taken some steps. We did not do this lightly and we put restrictions in place which have impacted everyone. We cannot see our families inside our homes. Citizens in Derry City and Strabane were the first to face further restrictions on social activities and in the economy and we are grateful for all the steps taken there including by the Council.

It was then essential to go further. Doing nothing was not an option and restrictions were put in place for every council area for a four week period from 16 October. The Minister for Health, the Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Scientific Officer have outlined the path of the virus very clearly and the Executive has acted.



We acted in the knowledge of the impacts. There are some encouraging signs, which mean we need to carry on with the basics over the next two weeks. There is still a way to go.

This document is our Exit Strategy. It sets out how we will approach the decisions needed in coming days.

We are acutely aware that Covid is about people and this Framework puts people at the heart of our planning. The Executive and all Departments have taken a number of steps and interventions since March. We remain very keen that everyone avails of the help and support that's out there especially those who are needing to take a Covid test or who are asked to self-isolate.

In this evolving situation, we will always look to see if there is more we can do. That is why the Executive has announced the following immediate steps:

- We are reviewing the information available to people who need a test or who need to self-isolate. We will make sure that people have all the information they need if they have symptoms and are booking a test, right through to exiting from self-isolation. The **Covid 19: Wrap Around** guide will ensure that the individual's journey through the process is supported by connection into all of the support required for individuals to stay safe and keep others safe. That could be urgent financial support, delivery of food or medicines direct to their door, or befriending and wellbeing support available locally and tailored to specific need;
- The Executive will further support community engagement. We will continue to actively support people, families and communities to follow the public health messaging. To do this we will work with Councils to lead local community conversations aimed at improving understanding and securing commitment to follow the messaging. Councils know their areas and people, and they will know best how to deploy the resources to get Covid and public health messaging into to their areas. The **Covid 19: Time to Talk** approach will build in Community Champions
- There will be further support for those who are vulnerable including those who cannot for genuine reasons wear face coverings, and for people who were previously shielding and need space and understanding outside of their homes. We want to engage young people in this. There will be a **Covid 19: Schools Challenge**, starting soon, for the design of wristbands for those who need space around them or who cannot wear face coverings
- We have made new regulations for face coverings on school transport
- We much prefer a culture of community commitment and compliance with public health guidance than a strategy based on enforcement. We will however continue to

look at whether those with an enforcement role need additional fines and penalties to be available to them

- With our partners in the business community, we will work with the sectors which are currently closed to ensure they are preparing fully for the possibility of being able to reopen. This will see a focus on the existing guidance and advice, to ask all our business sectors to re-engage with that in the interests of their staff and customers and supply chains, and we will proactively communicate to everyone on the need to be a responsible and respectful customer.

We are taking these steps now.

There is a long way to go yet. And we know that everyone wants to know what Christmas will look like. We are planning for this now and we have a very high aspiration. Our clear promise is that we will do absolutely everything we can to secure that, and we will make more announcements on this later on. Preparing for this means we all have to stick to the basics of public health advice.

**FIRST MINISTER**

**DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER**



## 2. Decision making in the Executive

When we published our Approach to Decision Making on 12 May, we explained how our decisions would be taken. Some five months later it is worth a recap of the key building blocks as these have guided us well so far and will continue to do so.

From the outset our **strategic priorities** have remained constant:

- The health and wellbeing of our citizens
- Our economic well being and revitalizing the economy
- Our societal and community well being

We reaffirm these priorities, with a particular emphasis on **people and families** as we know how important this is to everyone.

We said our **guiding principles** would be:

- Controlling transmission
- Protecting healthcare capacity
- Necessity
- Proportionality
- Reliance on evidence

This Framework reaffirms those principles and discusses them in more detail in the current context.

We said we would have a **partnership approach to:**

- Resourcing the health and care system
- Establish test, track and trace
- Set out clear guidance including for those who need to self-isolate
- Provide guidance as restrictions are relaxed
- Provide enforcement powers
- Support the most vulnerable
- Seek to enable social distancing in public places and buildings
- Keep the Assembly up to date

We reaffirm the partnership approach and we discuss this in more detail, including the invaluable contribution which key sectors have made so far.

We promised that we would take a **staged approach** to the lifting of restrictions. A key component of that was the need to be flexible. We set out a possible pathway in May and that was to a large degree achieved carefully, step by step, informed by risk analysis and an understanding of impacts.

Flexibility remains key. The next coming months cannot be predicted. The path of the virus can however be **modelled** and that has been a significant part of our approach and will remain vital.

We want to take the opportunity to say thank you for the effort so far. People are the common factor.

At its heart the business community is about its people, its customers, its suppliers. The business community has shown great innovation, turning manufacturing towards controlling the virus and protecting the health care system. They have been our partners. People innovate and adapt and the Executive has seen amazing examples of this so far.

And equally so at community level where the voluntary and community sector and sporting codes have given so much in partnership with us. There are people and families who were shielding and self-isolating who relied so much on the voluntary sector and the Executive is truly grateful. We saw considerable numbers of people step forward to volunteer their help and speak more about this in the Framework.

We also saw nurses and doctors volunteer to return to work in huge numbers in support of patients and their health service colleagues.

And leaders from all faiths here have shown great leadership and have been partners with us throughout.

In our Executive discussions, we have regularly noted some important and affirming developments that we want to keep hold of as we move through and out of this crisis. Again, people are the common factor. Volunteering, walking and cycling, the take up of new sports such as angling, innovation, and working in partnership and co-design in creative new ways.

The next section sets out the progression of the virus since lockdown in March.

3. **Covid 19 today** [DN A page for CMO and CSA, accompanied by some embedded data, to explain the trajectory of the virus to date. And positioning the public health advice at this point in the Framework.]

The next section of this Framework explains what we all need to do now.

#### 4. What we all need to do now and how we will support you

Exiting the current restrictions does not and cannot mean we return to life as we would wish. Some restrictions will be in place. There are things we all need to do now. Covid will not be beaten in this four week period. As was seen in March, the full lockdown had a dramatic effect on the virus but it was not beaten and the numbers rose again.

In section 3 above, CMO and CSA have laid out very clearly the rise of the virus over the late summer, how it is measured, and the impact it would have had if no action had been taken on 16 October. As restrictions are eased, it is inevitable that there will be some rise in numbers. We all must take steps to ensure that the numbers do not rise again in the same way. That is the only way to avoid future significant restrictions.

There are actions for the Executive, for sectors and for individuals. This is the social contract we have spoken about since the outbreak. This requires an ongoing partnership approach in line with our Approach to Decision Making and our social contract.

##### **The Executive**

The Executive will continue to take decisions based on the impacts on the economy, society, people and families.

Over the next two weeks we will ensure that there is easy to use guidance for those who need to take a test or self-isolate. We will ensure that there is **Covid 19: Wrap Around** support for those who need it.

We will also work with Councils to take messaging into local areas in a way which works best for their communities. We will develop with Councils the concept of Community Champions and we will provide support for this. The **Covid 19: Time to Talk** initiative will draw these actions together into a community focused approach

We will engage and encourage our young people to assist with support for those who need space or who cannot wear face coverings. We will launch a **Covid 19: Schools Challenge** to design a discrete and voluntary wrist band and lanyard for those who would find that of assistance.

We will put in place new and targeted communications campaigns to help everyone with adherence with the public health messaging.

We will consider if further law enforcement measures are needed at this time.

**Sectors [DN, this section to be expanded over the weekend]**

The Executive will support impacted sectors through continuing discussions about preparations for re-opening.

Our partners in the Retail sector have taken additional steps to ensure that customers can shop in public health compliant ways.

Partners in the Hospitality sector have made proposals for re-opening which are under active consideration.

### **People and families**

We ask everyone to maintain and achieve excellent social distancing. Small steps have big impacts and when these are added together, the overall effect makes a significant difference. Being part of a community effort through our own individual actions, and knowing we are making a difference is really important. It is something to be personally proud of, knowing our own personal actions have been in line with simple steps such as hand hygiene and wearing face coverings.

Most if not all shops and other places have hand sanitizer at the door and guidance on wearing face coverings and social distancing. Following those steps is a positive act of being part of a wider community effort and while these may seem small steps they are absolutely vital.

We have listened to those who genuinely cannot wear face coverings, and we hear that and understand. There are exemptions in the regulations. So we all need to have a good understanding of this because a proportion of our population are simply not able to do it. The kindness we have seen to each other since the outbreak began means being aware of this.

We should also be very aware of the people who were previously shielding. We have listened to their worries and concerns about being outside again. Our streets, shops and other settings do not look the same as when shielding began and that may be hard to imagine for those of us who were not asked to shield. We need to create an environment where everyone feels as safe as possible and we can all help with that, while taking the necessary steps to control the virus. Our elderly relatives and vulnerable people in our families and communities can be helped if we all practice social distancing and create that safer environment where people will worry less. That's another small but important step and we will all want to be part of that.

And most importantly, if you are asked or required to self-isolate, you must do so. This is one of the most important ways we have for hopefully avoiding more stringent restrictions which will impact you, your family and your community. There is help if

you need to self-isolate and we want you to avail of that if you need to. We realise that self-isolation can be a very worrying thing to think about. But it is essential.

The next section explains how we will take decisions in the Autumn and Winter.

## **5. How we will decide on the restrictions needed in Autumn and Winter**

The immediate priority is to focus on the four week period which began on 16 October, with significant restrictions being put in place. We will not be able to go back to the pre-March situation where there were no restrictions. So it is important that everyone knows how we will take the decision on which restrictions will be put in place.

The Executive has taken its decisions in the following way. The Department of Health publishes a daily data dashboard at 2pm. Everyone can see the direction of travel and we encourage businesses and citizens to use this essential resource. It shows the number of new positive cases on a daily basis, hospital admissions, bed and ICU capacity and, sadly, deaths. You can use this to see what the virus looks like in your area. We want people to follow the numbers closely.

If numbers improve, we need to dig deeper rather than relax our joint efforts.

Each week the Executive is presented with a report by the Minister of Health, and has available to it the expert advice of our CMO and CSA. The weekly paper on the “R” number, explained in section 3 above, is also published so that everyone can see the direction but also access the analysis.

The Executive will need to decide what restrictions to put in place to replace from 14 November.

Departments are working together on options for packages of restrictions for the Executive to consider. The final decision will of course depend on the state of Covid 19 in our community. That is why this Framework is being published now so that everyone can see the next steps in our decision making before we reach week 4 of the current restrictions. We will take our decision in coming days based on Covid data but also impacts on the economy, society, people and families.

We undertake to continue to work with key sectors, local councils, PSNI, and sectoral leads in the preparation of options.








Work is also underway on more medium to long term planning, to take account of the different environmental issues the Autumn and Winter will bring. This planning will include the Christmas period and the Executive is committed to doing everything we can to enable a family Christmas to take place. The Executive will make a separate announcement about Autumn and Winter planning.

Our approach to lifting and putting in restrictions has from the start been flexible, informed by the data and expert advice, and mindful of impacts. This will continue to be the case. The Executive has always preferred a pathway approach which is not locked into firm dates, although we appreciate fully that some sectors benefit from indicative dates to aid planning and we do that when we can. Our experience over the summer period was that it was possible to bring some easements forward, while some unfortunately had to be delayed or not implemented.








We continue to favour a flexible approach over a rigid framework which might not be possible to meet. Equally, we understand entirely that people, families and businesses want maximum certainty and indeed hope. So we are today publishing here an outline of the types of issues which will need to be considered before the end of the four week period and throughout the coming months.



## Range of Restriction Options (1 of 2)

|  |  |  |   |   |   |  | Key  |   |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|
|  |  |  |   |   |   |  | Indicates additional restriction options   | Indicates current position as of 30/10/2020 |
|  |  |  |   |   |   |  | Additional measures suggested by CMO & CSA   |   |
| Themes   | Less restrictive → More restrictive                                |  |   |   |   |  | Additional Comments  |   |
|  <b>MY HOME INDOORS</b>                   | 10 from up to 4 households   | 6 from 2 households  | 6 from 2 linked households                                | No mixing indoors   | Visits with a single person linked household only | Stay at home<br>No visiting second homes | Approaching Winter season where indoor gatherings in private dwellings are likely              |   |
|  <b>MY HOME OUTDOORS</b>                  | 30 from any number of households (incl. children)                  | 15 from any number of households (incl. children)                      | 6 from 2 households                                       |   |   |  | Approaching Winter season where outdoor gatherings in private dwellings are unlikely           |   |
|  <b>GATHERINGS &amp; MEETING PEOPLE</b>   | ≥ 30 allowed where risk assessed by organiser                      | ≥ 15 allowed where risk assessed by organiser                          | >15 not permitted   | >2 people prohibited unless under exceptional circumstances |   |  | May need to be viewed in conjunction with hospitality as this could overlap with group dinners |   |
|  <b>WEDDINGS &amp; CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS</b> | Number of guests limited by venue risk assessment only             | Max 10 people per table (excl. Top table & children aged 12 and under) | ≤10 can attend a wedding in a private dwelling            | ≤ 25 people can attend a wedding. No reception allowed.     | Marriage in exceptional circumstances             |  | May need to be viewed in conjunction with accommodation as some are wedding venues             |   |
|  <b>FUNERALS</b>                          | Number of guests at funerals limited by venue risk assessment only | No pre or post funeral activities                                      | ≤ 25 people can attend                                    | Funeral attendance for immediate family                     |   |  | Should be viewed in line with Weddings & Civil Partnerships to ensure no disparity             |   |
|  <b>SKILLS &amp; LEARNING</b>             | Schools open   | Alternative week-on week-off with half class sizes                     | Blended approach of distance and classroom-based learning | Distance learning in place                                  |   |  | Provide guidance on how to swap classroom air for fresh air every 20 minutes                   |   |
|  <b>HOSPITAL &amp; CARE HOME VISITS</b>  | Visits to care homes and hospitals permitted                       | No visits permitted to hospitals / care homes                          |   |   |   |  | Can be determined by local trust / care home provider  |   |

## Range of Restriction Options (2 of 2)

|   |  |                                      |                   |  |   |                                    |   |                      |                                    | Key   |   |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--|---|------------------------------------|---|----------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|
|   |  |                                      |                   |  |   |                                    |   |                      |                                    | Indicates additional restriction options  | Indicates current position as of 30/10/2020 |
| Themes  | Less restrictive → More restrictive                            |                                      |                   |  |   |                                    |   |                      |                                    | Additional measures suggested by CMO & CSA  |   |
|   |  |                                      |                   |  |   |                                    |   |                      |                                    | Additional Comments   |   |
|  <b>HOSPITALITY</b>                  | Restaurant / pubs open<br>Table service only<br>No table limit | Max. of 6 per table                  | 11pm closing time | Outdoor dining permitted                                 | Outdoor drinking only   | QR code to record personal details | Mandatory recording of seating position             | Takeaway dining only | Closed                             | Advanced warning required to order/cancel stock   |   |
|  <b>ENTERTAINMENT VENUES</b>         | Cinemas open<br>Concerts & Theatres for rehearsal/recording    | No live music                        |                   | No dancing   | Background music only where food/drink is served                  |                                    | Indoor recreation closed                            |                      | Indoor & Outdoor recreation closed | Typical uptake in Christmas events require advance notice for go ahead/cancellations        |   |
|  <b>TRAVEL &amp; TRANSPORT</b>       | Quarantine when arriving from international destinations       | Avoid travel outside local area      |                   | Necessary travel only                                    | Actively discourage car sharing with people from other households |                                    | No travel between University & home excl. Christmas |                      |                                    | In addition to keep windows partially open when car sharing                                 |   |
|  <b>ACCOMMODATION</b>                | Open to public   | Open to residents and wedding guests |                   | Open to critical workers only                            |   |                                    |   |                      |                                    | Travel into NI to spend time with friends and family requires accommodation to be available |   |
|  <b>WORKPLACE BUSINESS</b>           | Conference facilities open                                     | Phased return to office              |                   | Work from home if possible                               |   |                                    |   |                      |                                    | Has remained constant throughout restriction and relaxation cycles                          |   |
|  <b>EXERCISE, SPORT &amp; EVENTS</b> | Arena's with capacity of <5,000 open                           | Spectators permitted                 |                   | Risk assessment to determine relevant participant number | 15 participants outdoor non contact                               |                                    | No spectators permitted                             |                      | No sport permitted incl. elite     | As Winter approaches, many sports look to move indoors to continue participation            |   |
|  <b>RETAIL</b>                     | Essential & Non Essential Open                                 | Close contact appointment only       |                   | Close contact services closed                            | Non Essential Closed  |                                    |   |                      |                                    | November and December typically contain the five busiest shopping days of the year          |   |

**6. Following the public health messaging [DN, a concluding section with the top health messaging and links to key information channels]**

During the next two weeks we want everyone to follow the following vital steps:

And if you need help or advice, you can find it here: