

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

MEETING NOTE (12 March 2020)

INV Number:

TITLE/ORGANISATION:		Joint meeting HOCS and Chris Stewart – COVID-19	
VENUE:	<input type="checkbox"/> e.g. PB	Stormont Castle.	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
LIST OF ATTENDEES:		FM, DFM,	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minister	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PS	
OFFICIALS:	Mark Goodfellow – PPS FM Carol Morrow – PS DFM		
OTHERS:	Philip Weir Stephen McGlade		
KEY DISCUSSION POINTS:			
<p>HOCS clarified that there are no medical/scientific evidence to support measures announced by Taoiseach earlier today. Expect COBR will confirm UK measures later today.</p> <p>DFM expressed concern that the public is ahead of the Executive and Rol and Scotland are closing schools – it is not sustainable position to have schools closed in one part of the island but open in another part. Must have an all-island approach.</p> <p>HOCS suggested considering the issue after COBR and informed by CMO advice, then Ministers could decide to follow the science or make a political judgement. A</p>			

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meeting could be arranged with health Minister, CMO and Richard Pengelly and all Perm Secs.

FM stressed her intended approach - to follow the scientific advice.

The meeting reconvened with Health Minister, CMO and Richard Pengelly. FM shared detail of Taoiseach's statement, advising there was an urgent need to decide on action for NI.

Minister Swann clarified that containment measures are working in NI and following Rol position would crash the NHS and create unnecessary panic and fear. Complexities included grandparents being in more vulnerable group and could not therefore look after children if not at school.

Minister Swann reiterated need to follow the science. Closing schools will not stop the spread of COVID. Rol approach not appropriate for NI.

DFM referenced one island and two approaches – need to identify which approach is right and which isn't.

Meeting concluded.

ISSUES AGREED:

N/A

ACTION POINTS / OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE:

N/A

NOTE WRITTEN BY:

Mark Goodfellow

DATE:

12 March 2020