

RESTRICTED HANDLING

SC(20)28th Conclusions

SCOTTISH CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN ST ANDREW'S HOUSE, EDINBURGH
AT 9.30 AM ON WEDNESDAY, 8 JULY 2020

Present:	Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP	First Minister
	John Swinney MSP	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (*)
	Aileen Campbell MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government (*)
	Roseanna Cunningham MSP	Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (*)
	Fergus Ewing MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism (*)
	Kate Forbes MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Finance (*)
	Jeane Freeman MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport
	Fiona Hyslop MSP	Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Fair Work and Culture (*)
	Michael Matheson MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (*)
	Michael Russell MSP	Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs (*)
	Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People (*)
	Humza Yousaf MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Justice (*)
In Attendance:	Leslie Evans	Permanent Secretary
	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
	Graeme Dey MSP	Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (*)
	Dr Gregor Smith	Interim Chief Medical Officer
	David Rogers	Director of Constitution and Cabinet (*)
	Dominic Munro	Director, Exit Strategy (*)
	Scott Wightman	Director, External Affairs (*)
	John Somers	First Minister's Principal Private Secretary
	James Hynd	Head of Cabinet Secretariat
	Ian Donaldson	Deputy Director for Readiness and Transition (*)
	Brian Dornan	Head of Scotland House: London (*)
	Rachel Sunderland	Deputy Director, Population and Migration (*)
	Liz Lloyd	Special Adviser
	Colin McAllister	Special Adviser (*)
	Stuart Nicolson	Special Adviser (*)
	Aileen Easton	First Minister's Official Spokesperson (*)
	Chris Birt	First Minister's Policy and Delivery Unit (*)
	Chris Mackie	FM COVID Briefing Unit (*)
	Miranda McIntosh	Head of Look After Children Unit (*)
	Name Redacted	Cabinet Secretariat (*)
		Cabinet Secretariat (*)

(*) by tele-conference

Minutes of Meeting held on 30 June 2020

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 30 June (SC(20)27th Conclusions) were approved.

COVID-19: Coronavirus Update (*oral update*)

2. The First Minister invited the Interim Chief Medical Officer and Ms Freeman to provide Cabinet with an update on the progress of the COVID-19 pandemic and the work under way to counter its effects.

3. Dr Smith informed Cabinet that, as at 9 a.m. on 8 July, there were 18,309 confirmed cases of COVID-19 infection in Scotland, compared with 18,251 the previous week (*SC(20)27st Conclusions refers*). There had been a continuing downward trend in the number of new confirmed cases: of the new seven cases since the previous day, two had been reported by the UK Government testing programme and five by NHSScotland laboratories. The total number of confirmed deaths in hospital as a result of COVID-19 now stood at 2,490 (an increase of one from the previous day), compared with a cumulative total of 2,485 the previous week.

4. The previous day, a representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) had made an equivocal statement regarding the possibility of airborne transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, although further, urgent research was required before a definitive position could be reached. The WHO's position remained that the virus was spread by droplet transmission, but an WHO official had now acknowledged some evidence to suggest that airborne transmission could not be ruled out in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces.

5. If confirmed, this would alter the measures required to protect against infection and could signal new risks: compared with droplet transmission, airborne (or aerosol) transmission was characterised by the much longer presence of the virus in the air when an infected person had been in a confined space.

6. In discussion it was noted that this unconfirmed development, although potentially worrying, should in any case serve to underline the merits of using face coverings in public. The four Chief Medical Officers of UK countries would continue to monitor closely the research in this area, and would be alert to the implications of any changes in the formal position of the WHO.

7. Ms Freeman said that those who had been advised to shield should continue to do so until 31 July, as planned, although some of the rules regarding meeting people and travel would be relaxed in the meantime. Those who were shielding had been apart from their friends and relatives for over four months, and it was hoped that the ability to meet people outside from Friday, 10 July and to travel longer distances would go some way to address the feelings of isolation that many would have experienced.

8. So long as it was safe to do so, the intention was to pause the current shielding regime from 1 August, although this would depend on the results of research that was still under way.