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GOVERNMENT C-19 STRATEGY MEETING (20)67**

MEETING HELD AT FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

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Wednesday 6 May 2020 1030 - 1130

PRESENT

The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and First Secretary of State

The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP  
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and  
Local Government

The Rt Hon Steven Barclay MP  
Chief Secretary to the Treasury

The Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP  
Paymaster General

Helen Whately MP  
Minister of State at the Department of Health and  
Social Care

ALSO PRESENT

Sir Patrick John Thompson Vallance FRS FMedSci FRCP  
Chief Scientific Advisor to the Prime Minister

Professor Chris Whitty CB FRCP FFPH FMedSci  
Chief Medical Officer for England and the UK

Rosamond Roughton  
Director General, DHSC

Ruth May  
Chief Nursing Officer

Jenny Harries  
Deputy Medical Officer

Susan Hopkins  
National Infections Service, PHE

Aiden Fowler

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Care home delivery plan

THE FIRST SECRETARY OF STATE said that the current situation in care homes was a national emergency and the Prime Minister had offered his full support to this work. It was the Government's priority to reduce both the death and infection rates in care homes. He said the

materials provided offered a clear picture of the way forward based on five critical areas and we should work to implement any proposals at significant pace. He asked the DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE at DHSC to give an overview of the care home delivery plan.

The DIRECTOR GENERAL said that DHSC had worked with care providers to identify several measures aimed at reducing the spread of infections in care homes. One measure proposed would be to restrict the movement of staff between care homes, however, this had presented some key implementation challenges for care providers. She said the care providers needed a larger workforce pool to ensure they had capacity to restrict intra-care home movement. She said that some staff were concerned about the financial consequences of restricting shifts to one care home and many staff would not be willing to work in this way. She said further work was needed to understand the funding consequences and resource requirements to implement the proposal.

Continuing, she said that around 95 percent of care home staff were unregistered workers, so support of registered workers through the national recruitment campaign would do little to plug any gaps created by restricting workforce movement. She said that care home staff were recruited by individual providers but Local Authorities could offer recruitment support by identifying and prioritising care homes most in need of further resource.

The FIRST SECRETARY OF STATE said that care homes were a decentralised system and that a recommendation should go to the Prime Minister on the Government mandating the restriction of movement of care home workers in between care homes for one month, subject to legal consideration. He said that the Government could make workforce restrictions obligatory for one month because this was a high impact measure that would reduce infection rates. He said further work was needed to consider an offer of financial support to care home workers to facilitate compliance.

LPP/LAP

Further work would be needed to ensure that care homes are not left with significantly reduced resource as a result of any restrictions of movement.

The SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT said that he agreed with the proposals

- (b) DHSC had set out guidance restricting visits to symptomatic residents on the 13 March. This guidance was reinforced when the Government further understood asymptomatic spreading, however, it was not a legally enforced order. (Director General)
- (c) When this plan was presented last (28/04), DHSC felt the guidance on visiting had been effective at reducing visits. If this guidance needed to be mandated, DHSC would need to consult lawyers. (Director General)

The FIRST SECRETARY OF STATE said that he would recommend to the Prime Minister that the Government should mandate this guidance. He said the Government should work with Local Authorities to confirm guidance has been followed in all cases.

Continuing, the FIRST SECRETARY OF STATE said that PPE was a priority issue for the Prime Minister. He invited the MINISTER OF STATE FOR CARE to give an update on PPE shortages within care homes and the proposals to mitigate this.

The MINISTER OF STATE FOR CARE said that DHSC had ensured that all care providers had the contact details for their Local Resilience Forum. This would allow care providers to request emergency PPE and would ensure there is a distribution route to each care home. She said that the biggest challenge for PPE in care homes was the supply. She said she had ongoing discussions with Lord Deighton on this.

In discussion, the following points were made;

- (a) When requested on the National Supply Hotline, PPE could be delivered to care homes within 24 hours. DHSC was unsighted on the time for deliveries done by LRFs. although they invited care providers to complete a capacity tracker each day which included whether they would run out of stock in the next 48 hours. This had ensured those care homes in need of PPE were prioritised by LRF drops. (Director General, DHSC)