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**MEMORANDUM E (21) 135 (C)**

**FROM:       FIRST MINISTER  
              DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER**

**DATE:        10 June 2021**

**TO:           EXECUTIVE COLLEAGUES**

**FINAL EXECUTIVE PAPER: Pathway out of Restrictions – Proposals for Relaxation - Indoor/outdoor gatherings, household/bubbles, close contact services, licenced & unlicensed premises, live music/dancing**

**Introduction**

1. The purpose of this paper is to outline a number of proposals submitted for relaxation and to agree a position.

**Background**

2. In the Pathway out of Restrictions, the Executive outlined its priorities for relaxing restrictions. This included a focus on outdoor settings, and allowing families the opportunity to reunite. This group of relaxations builds on that focus, as well as having significant benefits for the music and events sector which have been unable to return since we initially locked down in March 2020.
3. Advice has also been sought from the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Adviser.
4. You will note that their advice raises concerns about making further relaxations at this point due a number of Delta variant related factors, i.e. the discovery of it within the community, the significant number of unknowns in relation to the efficacy of the vaccine in relation to it, and the relationship between cases number and hospitalisations.

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5. In light of the Delta variant concerns and the timing of data availability, this paper proposes ratification at a time when more data will be available to allow the Executive to make fully informed decisions. Whilst it is not ideal to give indicative dates, subject to further decisions, it is required given the concerns around the variant and the need to fully ascertain the impact of previous relaxations.

### **Working from Home, Social Distancing and Face Covering decisions**

6. There have been recent discussions on moves to the return to workplaces, the wearing of face coverings and the continued requirement for social distancing. You'll be aware that UKG are considering these issues under their stage four relaxations due to be announced on Monday 14 June.
7. We understand they are considering a number of options, ranging from maintaining the status quo to the removal of the requirements. They are also considering a number of interim options, such as application in certain settings only, e.g. allow some sectors to return to work, remove social distancing for outdoor events only, move face covering requirements into guidance only.
8. Officials across Government here are working through the options available here, however given the Delta variant resulting in the epidemiological picture changing rapidly, it is proposed that we delay any further exploration of these areas until we have more data available and allow our discussions to be informed by that data, as well as positions elsewhere.

### **Summary of Proposed Relaxations**

9. From 21 June (subject to ratification on 17 June):
  - a) To permit indoor gatherings in a domestic setting of ten people from no more than two households. If one household has ten members, the maximum is increased to 15 from no more than two households.

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- b) To permit outdoor gatherings in a domestic setting of 15 people from an unlimited number of households.
- c) Remove the linked households/bubble provision.
- d) To permit outdoor gatherings to the maximum allowed as per risk assessment for venue across all sectors. Over 30 people must be an organised gathering and would require a risk assessment.
- e) Enables close contact services to open without appointments but with remaining mitigations.
- f) In licenced and unlicenced premises which provide or sell food and drink (whether or not including intoxicating liquor) for consumption on the premises permit live music at background or ambient levels; the volume must be such to enable visitors to conduct conversation at normal loudness of speech.
- g) At outdoor events, permit live music and dancing, without restriction to background or ambient levels.
- h) Permit live music, without restriction to background or ambient levels for rehearsal, recording or performance purposes in concert venues, theatres and other indoor venues which, for the duration of the rehearsal, recording or performance are set aside for that purpose. No dancing for audience.
- i) Permit live music, without restriction to background or ambient levels for “other indoor venues” - can include a space within larger premises – for example a function room or conference suite within a hotel. In such circumstances access to the venue must be effectively controlled and managed and the venue must be sufficiently isolated from the rest of the premises to ensure that the volume of the music in the venue does not breach ambient or background levels in other parts of the premises. No dancing for audience.

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**Note** - entry to performances for audiences will be by ticket only. Tickets must be purchased in advance of the performance. Audiences for indoor events must have allocated seating and remain seated.

- j) Enable social distancing at minimum 1 meter for live music related activity in indoor seated venues and at all outdoor events.

### **From 1 July 2021 (subject to ratification on 17 June)**

- k) A restart of overnight residencies for youth services as part of the continued phased reopening of youth services to facilitate delivery of the summer youth programme as part of the continued phased reopening of youth services, facilitate delivery of the summer youth programme.

### **From 22 July 2021 (subject to ratification on 15 July)**

- l) Remove any restrictions on live music and dancing in licenced and unlicensed premises which provide or sell food and drink (whether or not including intoxicating liquor) for consumption on the premises.

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### CMO/CSA Advice

#### General comment:

CMO/CSA have advised that they are very mindful of the current health service pressures and there is in their view little tolerance or capacity for significant increased COVID-19 admissions. If indeed admissions of the Delta variant are x 2.4 and vaccine effectiveness more dependent on second doses then the Executive will need to factor this in to the timing of decisions on any further relaxations which may be best deferred to middle to end of July.

#### Proposal specific comments and Departmental responses:

Proposal	CMO/CSA Advice	Proposer response
To permit indoor gatherings in a domestic setting of ten people from no more than two households. If one household has ten members, the maximum is increased to 15 from no more than two households.	Agreed, subject to review of data at time.	TEO - Content
To permit outdoor gatherings in a domestic setting of 15 people from an unlimited number of households	Agreed, subject to review of data at time.	TEO - Content
Remove the linked households/bubble provision	Agreed, subject to review of data at time.	TEO - Content
To permit outdoor gatherings to the maximum allowed as per risk assessment for venue across all sectors. Over 30 people must be an organised gathering and would require a risk assessment.	<p>This would allow events of any size, up to many thousands to take place. For festivals and similar, social contacts are likely to be close and may be prolonged, and even outdoors close contact is associated with risk of transmission.</p> <p>Travel to and from such events and socialising in</p>	<p>TEO - EIS will be asked to do messaging on travel issues. Note DfI are currently producing guidance for coach use.</p> <p>Proposals on the use of LFTs will be brought forward when the learning event report is ready, along</p>

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	<p>domestic and commercial environments before and after will be difficult to control. There are therefore likely to be significant risks.</p> <p>If events are allowed, consideration should be given to use of LFTs to mitigate risk.</p>	<p>with the learning from the events being held by UKG.</p>
<p>Enable close contact services to open without appointments but with remaining mitigations</p>	<p>Agreed, subject to data at the time, providing that the following issues are addressed:</p> <p>1) social distancing within service premises is maintained.</p> <p>2) arrangements are in place to control queueing outside</p>	<p>DfE - The mitigations recommended by CMO/CSA and guidance review sought by BIT are in place. DfE having consulted with the trade bodies and are content to support the CMO/CSA advice to defer recommencement of walks in until middle to end of July.</p> <p>It would be beneficial if an indicative date could be indicated.</p>
<p>In licenced and unlicensed premises which provide or sell food and drink (whether or not including intoxicating liquor) for consumption on the premises permit live music at background or ambient levels; the volume must be such to enable visitors to conduct conversation at normal loudness of speech.</p>	<p>Agreed, subject to data at the time.</p>	<p>DfC - Noted</p>
<p>At outdoor events permit live music, without restriction to background or ambient levels and dancing</p>	<p>This would facilitate large concerts. It will be almost impossible to maintain social distancing, and individuals will shout to</p>	<p>DfC - Acknowledge the practical issue in terms of ensuring social distance in such circumstances.</p>

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	<p>each other / sing at very close range.</p> <p>Travel to and from such events and socialising in domestic and commercial environments before and after will be difficult to control. There are therefore likely to be significant risks.</p> <p>If events are allowed, consideration to should be given to use of LFTs to mitigate risk.</p>	<p>Use of LFT will be considered to ensure consistency with general position in terms of outdoor gatherings.</p> <p>TEO - EIS will be asked to do messaging on travel issues. Note Dfl are currently producing guidance for coach use.</p> <p>Proposals on the use of LFTs will be brought forward when the learning event report is ready, along with the learning from the events being held by UKG.</p>
<p>Permit live music, without restriction to background or ambient levels for rehearsal, recording or performance purposes in concert venues, theatres and other indoor venues which, for the duration of the rehearsal, recording or performance are set aside for that purpose. No dancing.</p>	<p>Agreed, subject to data at the time. Dancing can be permitted as part of a performance.</p>	<p>DfC - Dancing as part of a performance is a welcome addition to the recommendation.</p>
<p>Permit live music, without restriction to background or ambient levels for "other indoor venues" can include a space within larger premises – for example a function room or conference suite within a hotel. In such circumstances access to the venue must be effectively controlled and managed and the venue must be</p>	<p>This would facilitate large concerts. It will be difficult to maintain social distancing, and individuals will shout to each other / sing at very close range.</p> <p>Travel to and from such events and socialising in domestic and commercial environments before and after will be difficult to control. There are</p>	<p>DfC - The intention in the proposal was that audiences would have to remain seated throughout though this wasn't captured clearly in the drafting and we accept the recommendation. Use of LFT will be considered to ensure consistency with general position in</p>

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<p>sufficiently isolated from the rest of the premises to ensure that the volume of the music in the venue does not breach ambient or background levels in other parts of the premises.</p> <p><b>** Note</b> - entry to performances for audiences will be by ticket only. Tickets must be purchased in advance of the performance. Audiences for indoor events must have allocated seating</p>	<p>therefore likely to be significant risks.</p> <p>Audiences must remain seated in their allocated seating for the duration of the event (simply providing allocated seating will not be enough), and wear face coverings. No dancing or standing should be allowed, other than to transit in / out of the venue.</p> <p>If large events are allowed, consideration to should be given to use of LFTs to mitigate risk.</p>	<p>terms of indoor large gatherings.</p> <p>TEO - EIS will be asked to do messaging on travel issues. Note DfI are currently producing guidance for coach use.</p> <p>Proposals on the use of LFTs will be brought forward when the learning event report is ready, along with the learning from the events being held by UKG.</p>
<p>Enable social distancing at minimum 1 meter for live music related activity in indoor seated venues and at outdoor events.</p>	<p>Agreed, subject to data, for indoor events.</p> <p>We do not see how this can be maintained at outdoor standing events.</p>	<p>DfC - Welcome 1 metre distancing at seated indoor events.</p> <p>1 metre would be recommended in guidance related to outdoor events. Use of LFT would be considered to ensure consistency with general position in terms of outdoor gatherings.</p>
<p><b>From 1 July 2021</b></p> <p>A restart of overnight residential for youth services as part of the continued phased reopening of youth services to facilitate delivery of the summer youth programme.</p>	<p>Agreed, subject to data.</p>	<p>DE - The programme is due to be implemented from 1 July to 31 August, and deferring a decision to middle/end July is not an option for the summer youth programme. EA guidance for residential events will focus on mitigations, including limits on occupancy in accommodation, social distancing,</p>

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		bubbles, facemasks and hand washing. Arrangements to use lateral flow tests are also at an advance stage and EA have committed to implementing any further DoH recommendations. NI is likely to be the only region in UK and Ireland where youth residential activity is not permitted.
<b>From 22 July 2021</b> Remove any restrictions on live music and dancing in licenced and unlicensed premises which provide or sell food and drink (whether or not including intoxicating liquor) for consumption on the premises.	Too early to provide advice.	DfC - While recognising the current position and the difficulty it presents in terms of offering specific advice at this time, notice of a potential date to allow for planning would be welcomed by the sectors involved. An indicative planning date, clearly subject to ratification based on data to be advised by the Department of Health, would be welcomed.

### Behavioural Science Advice

10. BiT and ILab colleagues have recommended an audit of existing guidance for organisations to ensure that it matches the most up to date understanding of how the virus spreads.

### Response

11. Departments and government agencies are regularly asked to ensure that their sectoral guidance is up to date both in respect of the latest position for the regulations and most recent public health advice.

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### Recommendation

12. It is recommended that the Executive agree:

- the proposed dates for the following relaxations (as below) with a ratification dates of 17 June and 15 July,
- and recommendations in relation to a safer travelling messaging, and the use of LFTs.

#### **From 21 June (subject to ratification on 17 June):**

- a) To permit indoor gatherings in a domestic setting of ten people from no more than two households. If one household has ten members, the maximum is increased to 15 from no more than two households. (Does not include children 12 and under).
- b) To permit outdoor gatherings in a domestic setting of 15 people from an unlimited number of households. (Does not include children 12 and under).
- c) Remove the linked households/bubble provision.
- d) To permit outdoor gatherings to the maximum allowed as per risk assessment for venue across all sectors. Over 30 people must be an organised gathering and would require a risk assessment.
- e) Enables close contact services to open without appointments but with remaining mitigations.
- f) In licenced and unlicenced premises which provide or sell food and drink (whether or not including intoxicating liquor) for consumption on the premises, permit live music at background or ambient levels; the volume must be such to enable visitors to conduct conversation at normal loudness of speech. No dancing.

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- g) At outdoor events permit live music and dancing, without restriction to background or ambient levels.
- h) Permit live music, without restriction to background or ambient levels for rehearsal, recording or performance purposes in concert venues, theatres and other indoor venues which, for the duration of the rehearsal, recording or performance are set aside for that purpose. No dancing for audience but permitted as part of performance.
- i) Permit live music, without restriction to background or ambient levels for “other indoor venues” - can include a space within larger premises – for example a function room or conference suite within a hotel. In such circumstances access to the venue must be effectively controlled and managed and the venue must be sufficiently isolated from the rest of the premises to ensure that the volume of the music in the venue does not breach ambient or background levels in other parts of the premises. No dancing for audience but permitted as part of performance.

**Note** - entry to performances for audiences will be by ticket only. Tickets must be purchased in advance of the performance. Audiences for indoor events must have allocated seating and must remain seated (unless using facilities).

- j) Regulate for social distancing at minimum 1 meter for live music related activity in indoor seated venues and encourage social distancing in guidance for all outdoor events.
- k) EIS to prepare messaging around safer travel options.
- l) Return to decisions on the use of Lateral Flow Tests when the report from the learning events and pilots elsewhere are available.

**From 1 July 2021 (subject to ratification on 17 June)**

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- m) A restart of overnight residentials for youth services as part of the continued phased reopening of youth services to facilitate delivery of the summer youth programme as part of the continued phased reopening of youth services.

**From 22 July 2021 (Subject to ratification on 15 July)**

- n) Remove any restrictions on live music and dancing in licenced and unlicensed premises which provide or sell food and drink (whether or not including intoxicating liquor) for consumption on the premises.

**RT. HON ARLENE FOSTER MLA**  
**First Minister**

**MICHELLE O'NEILL MLA**  
**deputy First Minister**

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