

**MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING: 16 MARCH 2021**

**MEETING CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM**

**Present:** First Minister (Chair)  
deputy First Minister (Chair)  
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs  
Minister for Communities  
Minister for the Economy  
Minister of Education  
Minister of Finance  
Minister of Health  
Minister for Infrastructure  
Minister of Justice

**In attendance:** Junior Minister, TEO (Mr. Lyons)  
Junior Minister, TEO (Mr. Kearney)  
  
Interim Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service  
Head of Executive and Central Advisory Division  
Dr Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer  
Dr Declan Bradley, Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser  
Ms Karen Pearson, Director, EU Relations, TEO

**INTRODUCTION**

The First Minister chaired agenda items 1 – 3.

**AGENDA ITEM 1**

**Minutes of previous meetings**

**E (M) (21) 19                      Minutes of the Executive Workshop of 10 March 2021**

1. The Executive agreed the minutes of the Executive Workshop of 10 March 2021.

**E (M) (21) 20                      Minutes of the Executive Meeting of 11 March 2021**

7. The Minister of Health introduced, and the Executive discussed, this paper.
8. **The Executive meeting was adjourned** to enable the Minister of Health to attend the Assembly, and to facilitate further engagement in relation to proposals within the Executive paper.
9. **The meeting reconvened at 1.10 p.m.**
10. Following further discussion, and proposed amendments to Recommendations (vi) and (vii) of the Executive paper, the Executive agreed that:
  - (i) the requirement in regulation 3 for a review of the need for the restrictions and requirements in the No. 2 Regulations had been duly met;
  - (ii) the current restrictions and requirements in the No. 2 Regulations, as amended, were at this point in time an appropriate and necessary response to the serious and imminent threat to public health which was posed by the incidence and spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in Northern Ireland;
  - (iii) overall the restrictions and requirements imposed by these Regulations continued to be proportionate to what the Regulations sought to achieve, which was a public health response to that infectious disease threat;
  - (iv) the restrictions be formally reviewed on or before 15 April 2021;
  - (v) an increase in provision for elite sports competition be included in the regulations, removing the previous exclusion of new competitions, effective by 25 March;
  - (vi) from 1 April:
    - a. 10 people from 2 households, including children under 12, would be permitted to undertake outdoor sporting activities, as defined in the regulations;
    - b. Up to 6 people from two households, including children under 12, may meet outdoors in a private dwelling (increasing to 10 people from two households, including children under 12, from 12 April);
    - c. Garden centres and plant nurseries would be included in Phase 1 of a contactless 'click and collect' scheme;

- (vii) from 12 April, subject to Executive ratification in the week after the Easter weekend:
  - a. Removal of the requirement to 'stay at home unless you have a reasonable excuse' provision, instead promoting a 'stay local' message while continuing a strong 'work from home' message;
  - b. Allow contactless 'click and collect' for all non-essential retail – subject to the overall health position at that time, and DfE evaluation of the limited 8 March re-opening of non-essential 'click and collect';
  - c. Allow sports training to resume by sports clubs affiliated with recognised sports Governing Bodies, in small groups of up to 15 people but with all indoor spaces closed except essential toilet facilities.
- (viii) the above changes were agreed subject to:
  - a. clear communication and an enhanced communications strategy;
  - b. input from the Adherence Group in terms of behaviour change and practical interventions to facilitate adherence – addressing the need to ensure the public did not engage in risky behaviours associated with these outdoor activities (e.g. car sharing to/from outdoor activities, congregating on the margins of outdoor activities etc);
  - c. monitoring of behavioural compliance by lead Departments, particularly in relation to risky behaviours potentially associated with permitted outdoor activities.

11. The Chief Medical Officer was requested to provide an update on the impact of the vaccine roll-out on transmission of the COVID-19 virus for a future Executive meeting.

#### **E (21) 066 (C)      International Travel**

12. The First Minister introduced, and the Executive discussed, this paper.

13. The deputy First Minister advised of her view that all international travellers from outside the Common Travel Area should be required to quarantine.