

Deputy Principal working within Strategic Policy Division of DfE, also communicated via email correspondence on 8 April 2020 with officials in Scotland to seek information on their approach to the Scottish equivalent of the £25,000 Scheme **Exhibit[PG/055.2 – INQ000616264]**. The officials were Karen Donachie and John Lawson from Dundee City Council

93. DfE officials were not aware of what the UK Government’s plans were in relation to national schemes. For example, following the announcement of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme on 20 March 2020 for employed workers, a DfE official spent around 4/5 days working on an options paper for a Self-employed Hardship scheme. Whilst a number of high level options were identified, no detailed design of the scheme had been undertaken and work on the options paper ceased when the UK Government announced its SEISS on 26 March 2020. While it is recognised that government departments across the UK were all working at pace to develop and provide economic support, greater transparency of the UK Government’s intended schemes would have avoided duplication in this instance. DfE officials were able to get some idea of what other Devolved Administrations were planning, but that was as a result of officials engaging on an ad hoc basis.
94. DfE is not aware if HMT’s approach to intergovernmental relations changed during the pandemic in comparison to prior to the pandemic. DfE does not have a direct relationship with HMT in respect of funding. As noted in paragraph 87, the established protocol is for HMT to be contacted via DoF and from DfE’s perspective, this continued to be the case.

Data, Modelling, Advice and Analysis

Sharing Information

95. DfE played a significant role in analysing the economic impact of the pandemic and providing analysis and evidence on this matter to the NI Executive to inform decision making on the imposition and non-imposition of NPIs. The metrics used by DfE to monitor the economic impact of the pandemic are set out in the dashboards, an example of which is exhibited at **Exhibit [PG/056 - INQ000104237]**. These covered key macroeconomic indicators such as employment, unemployment, the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits, business activity and economic output as well as more “real time” data on issues including city centre footfall and HGV movements.