



Home Office

Briefing for Cabinet

Sign off:	Angela Perfect, COVID-19 Gold	From:	COVID-19 Policy Operations Programme Hub
To:	Home Secretary	Date:	07.05.20
Subject: CABINET CC(20)17			
<p>MEETING TO BE HELD VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE</p> <p>Thursday 7 May 2020 1100-1200</p> <hr/> <p>AGENDA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Parliamentary Business</u> - from the Leader of the House of Commons and the Leader of the House of Lords. - <u>Covid-19 Response</u>– from the Prime Minister 			
<p>HO Objective: To ensure an effective response in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policing and Law and Order (including Fire and Rescue services) • Counter Terrorism • Securing the Border • Supporting critical Ministerial Functions • Staff Safety and Wellbeing • Critical Enabling Support Functions • Core Business as Usual 			
Attendees: Cabinet Ministers			
<p>Attachments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annex A: Key points to make 2. Annex B: Home Office Bill updates 3. Annex C: Background 			

Annex A: Key Points to Make

Agenda Item 1: Parliamentary Business

No parliamentary business to raise. See Annex A for a list of bill updates.

Agenda Item 2: Covid-19 Response

1) Health Measures at the Border

- In March, I raised the importance of our posture at the border in managing this virus.

- **There has since been excellent work X-WH to developing a package of health measures, in order** to enhance public confidence and reduce the future risk of imported cases ahead of potential second, or even third wave

- **I am pleased through a series of Ministerial groups we have now reached agreement that this package will include:**
 1. Ramping up of communications in the UK and overseas about the new measures being brought into force and about existing social distancing measures;
 2. Requiring all passengers arriving in the UK to give their contact details **digitally** through a locator form;
 3. Advising all passengers to download and use the NHSX contact tracing app; and
 4. Introduce a requirement for all non-exempt arrivals, including British Citizens, **to self-isolate for 14 days on arrival** and that where passengers are unable to do so in suitable accommodation, they enter a facility selected by Government at their own expense.

- We will continue to finalise communications and engagement plans as we work towards an implementation date at the end of May

2) Easing of Social Distancing

- **It is crucial that we base our decisions on scientific advice.**

- **We have achieved extremely high levels of compliance so far.** The evidence suggests the success of these measures has been founded on broad public support and understanding, with a limited number of fines issued by the police.

- **We must continue to prioritise maintaining public support. The relaxations need to have a clear and understandable public health rationale.** Changes

which are perceived as illogical or unfair risk increasing levels of non-compliance. For instance, the public may quite rightly ask why they can go through crowded public spaces but not meet their friends and family in a way which complies with social distancing guidance.

- **Relaxations around leisure, non-essential retail, and other discretionary activities will require us to fundamentally revise our approach to enforcement and legal restriction.**
- **These relaxations will expand the reasons for which people are permitted to leave their home, rendering our “stay at home” legal restrictions largely void and unenforceable.** Under the current framework, relaxations will make it harder for both the public and the police to know what they should and shouldn't do.
- **I therefore recommend we change our model so that we create a list of restricted activities.** This could help focus enforcement on outlying behaviours- such as large public gatherings. More importantly it would also provide clarity to both the public and the police.
- **We should also be led by the behavioural science and evidence on whether legal restrictions (as opposed to strongly communicated government guidance) would increase compliance.**
- **It is also important to note that relaxations will likely increase pressures on the police, as we anticipate an accompanying uptick in crime.** We should consider in every case (including for new policies such as on borders, or testing) whether enforcement is more appropriately picked up by other agencies. In every instance, we will want to be aware of the risks posed by increased police enforcement activity on public trust.
- **The police and MI5 have also stressed the importance of early warning and engagement on changes to social distancing.** We will want to ensure they and other key services are involved in discussions around enforcement and contingency planning as soon as practicable.

Crime: wider implications

- **We must adopt a phased approach to relaxations which accounts for anticipated increases in crime. The police must be equipped to respond to increased demand.** For example, re-opening the night time economy as part of future relaxation measures should account for the potential for of alcohol-related crime and disorder.

We should also consider the potential positive impact of relaxations for vulnerable groups. In addition to the economic benefits, the re-opening of schools would have significant child protection benefits. We must continue to ensure our schools are always available for vulnerable children.

PPE

- **As I set out last week, I am still firmly of the opinion that we should not recommend the use facemasks for the general public and general**

workplaces. Should we do so, there is every chance that we could be deprive the NHS and other emergency services of vital stocks.

- **Face coverings are the least effective measure and the science behind their effectiveness is weak.** It should be a backstop only. Recommending the use of face masks may confuse our clear message and reducing compliance with social distancing.
- **If we recommend face masks, we need supply chains that can deliver this. We must ensure that the public do not conflate face coverings with PPE and that those who genuinely need PPE as part of their functions can still access them.**
- **We also need to be clear about the responsibilities and obligations for public sector, transport sector and others to provide any face coverings: and what this may mean for delivery of critical functions.**

Safer Workplaces

- **Safer workplace guidance should act as a blueprint for all employers and employees. It should show best practice clearly and also be realistic about the vast array of different settings that it will apply to and the needs of different businesses.**
- **My officials have highlighted concerns in the guidance. Early sight of guidance helps departments to prepare and shape what is workable.**
- **We await sight of the next iteration, but I would welcome a carve out for fire and police. We must be alive for the potential union and staffing issues which could compromise delivery of critical services when drafting such guidance.**

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Annex C - Background

SAGE last met on the 5 May 2020.

Social distancing

- The UK is seeing a gradual decline in COVID-19 cases due to the current strict social distancing measures. Social distancing measures remain important to reduce cases to a manageable level for an effective contact tracing strategy. Analysis is ongoing to understand where easements could be made, focusing on the measures with the lowest impact on transmission.

PPE

- The scientific evidence is weakly supportive of the use of face coverings in limited indoor situations. Further research is required to understand the primary transmission route of COVID-19.

Social Distancing Measures

- The next statutory review of social distancing measures will be on 7 May. Ahead of this, Cabinet Office has prepared an initial list of options to relax the measures for departments to assess. Areas for consideration have been grouped into 'fiches', and include Public Spaces and Mass Gatherings, Transport, Education, Safer Workplaces (incorporating the opening of various parts of the economy), Shielding and Isolation.
- Home Office has contributed to this work to ensure the considerations for our key outputs are factors into this work.

Borders

- Travel into the UK has dropped significantly in response to the coronavirus outbreak, up to 99% for aviation passenger loads, but it's important that commercial routes are kept open to make sure that British people overseas can get home, to support our supply chains, and to ensure the delivery of vital freight and equipment. A significant test will result from the reopening of ports and routes and the management of an at present unknown schedule to increased passenger movements.
- Indeed, Home Office, DfT and DHSC have worked together to agree a way forward on port and border measures that balances reassuring the public that we are doing everything possible to limit the spread of Covid-19 with also keeping the flow of critical imports and supply chains working.
- Since the FSS chaired deep-dive last Thursday, there has been a lot of excellent work across government on how we ensure there is a health-based approach to the border as we move into the next phase of managing this virus.
- We have agreed a complimentary set of measures to enhance public confidence and reduce the future risk of imported cases ahead of potential second or even third wave.

- These measures include:
 1. Ramping up of communications in the UK and overseas about the new measures being brought into force and about existing social distancing measures;
 2. Requiring all passengers arriving in the UK to give their contact details **digitally** to aid any subsequent need to trace them;
 3. Advising all passengers to download and use the NHSX contact tracing app; and
 4. Introducing a requirement for all non-exempt arrivals, including British Citizens, **to self-isolate for 14 days on arrival** and that where passengers are unable to do so in suitable accommodation, they enter a facility selected by Government at their own expense.

- The two critical things here are **self-isolation and enforcement,**

Self-Isolation

- Self-isolation will apply to all persons, unless covered by an exemption, arriving in the UK. **They will be required to self-isolate for a period of 14 days from arrival.** This can be in:
 - i. either an **individual's home, or the residence of family/friends** they are staying with; or
 - ii. where they have no suitable accommodation, accommodation will be identified by the Government (such as hotels) this will also be at the expense of the individual and will be secure/monitored.
 - If after 14 days, they are not displaying any symptoms they are no longer required to self-isolate.
- The approach in the paper seeks to align the self-isolation guidance to current PHE advice; CMO may wish to say more on this.

Enforcement

- It is crucial that we develop a policy that's enforceable to maintain compliance. Our approach relies on a combination of **upstream incentives and domestic interventions.**

Upstream

- There will be a **strong communications** campaign to prospective travellers informing them of the new measures and penalties and a significant role for carriers to play. This will ensure that most people entering the country, having still chosen to travel, can be expected to comply with the conditions.

UK Border

- At the border, Border Force Officers will enforce the locator form by carrying out spot checks on individuals to make sure that they have completed their details and done so accurately. I will let Paul speak to this in more detail.

In-country

- Once in-country, where the requirement to self-isolate applies – we need to consider further options for random sampling, potentially by local authorities – to check that people are staying where they should be.
- **This is not something I believe the police should be doing routinely**, as they need focus on serious criminality. However, where they do come across someone who is breaking the requirement they will of course take action.

Timing

- Since March, I have been consistently raising the importance of our posture at the border in managing this virus.
- *The CMO has already been clear that defining the “tipping point” is difficult. We know that the “r” will rise as existing restrictions are eased, for these measures to have an effect we must implement them sooner.*
- *The Border has a significant role in keeping “r” low and it is the frontline to heading off a second wave and also to give confidence in our response to the public and international partners. This means implementing these measures by the end of May.*

Exemptions

I have read the economic analysis and agree that all goods should be exempt. I also agree that we should exempt all CTA travel.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- On the 28 April and again on 5 May SAGE discussed recommending to government that the use of cloth face masks could be considered for short periods, in enclosed spaces, where social distancing cannot be controlled. These enclosed settings are likely to include public transport and shops. SAGE have previously advised that public transport presented a low risk of additional transmission.
- We are clear that we do not see the use of PPE in enclosed spaces as something that should be supported, given the weak scientific evidence and the huge strain that already exist on our supply chains.
- Without strong, or even good, scientific evidence we will be introducing an option that may: denude NHS of vital stocks; compromise supply chain planning; and

introduce a further level of psychological risk for people (including the public and the public sector). For context, just for Border Force this would require approximately 140,000 masks each week.

- It is important to also note that, policing tools that rely on facial characteristics to identify suspects would be hampered by a societal shift to the wearing of face coverings in public spaces, both in the short and long term.
- We need to recognise that the protection offered by PPE and social distancing will be affected by the human behaviours. For example, any view on whether masks offer protection in a general public setting might focus on whether masks *can* offer protection when properly used. In reality, there are lots of other issues that should be factored in:
 - Will public be wearing them properly, including removing them safely;
 - How will they dispose of potentially contaminated masks safely to avoid contamination;
 - Whether there will there be sufficient supply