

Emergency Advisory Group

Interim advice note (revised 26 July 2021)

22/07/2021

The Emergency Advisory Group met on 22nd July 2021 to consider a number of matters at a planned meeting. Earlier that day, Tynwald did not support the Council of Ministers to suspend Tynwald standing orders to allow the Court to consider Supplementary Order paper number 2 which contained amending regulations made under the Public Health Act 1990. The EAG received an urgent request from the Council of Ministers to provide its advice on the regulations. The EAG wishes to make it clear that its advice has not been sought previously on these regulations.

The EAG wishes to share its profound disappointment at the short notice in which it was asked to consider the Public Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Amendment) (No.16) Regulations 2021 ("the Regulations"). The group was informed at 15:55, five minutes before its meeting, that its view would be sought on changes to the Public Health regulations. The regulations are complex and need careful consideration. The group has therefore agreed to produce this interim advice paper, summarising the issues at hand before providing a more detailed advice paper on the regulations. The EAG also points out that it does not have access to the detailed underlying datasets on which CoMIN has made its policy supporting these regulations. This means it is difficult to offer detailed analysis or advice without access to the same information used by CoMIN.

The group sees three core areas of concern:

1. Context

The Delta variant is now well established in the Isle of Man and community transmission is uncontrolled. There are no domestic mitigations in place, except for those in healthcare and other high-risk settings. These regulations speak primarily to border related controls which appear to be belated in the context of the current infection rates. The current Isle of Man seven day rate of infection per 100,000 people is 2,138. This is four times higher than the equivalent UK rate of 495.

2. Public Health engagement and consultation

Given the nature of the powers given to the Council of Ministers in the regulations in respect of determining the appropriate vaccination status for entry to the Island and the designation of countries deemed 'safe' for unrestricted entry to the Isle of Man, the EAG's view is that these decisions should only be made after taking clear and explicit advice from the Director of Public Health. The EAG would urge CoMIN to amend the regulations to reflect this. In order to ensure this is an appropriate approach, the EAG requests that CoMIN agree to the EAG seeking the view of the Director of Public Health on this matter.

3. Mitigations

The EAG strongly repeats its view shared in its first advice paper, that given the current rate of spread of the Covid-19 virus in the Isle of Man, CoMIN introduce as a matter of urgency, clear recommendations and strong guidance on mitigations for use in public places and lower risk settings. These include the use of face coverings in places like supermarkets, shops and hospitality settings. Masks should be mandatory on public transport. The impact

of well-ventilated spaces on reducing the spread of Covid should also be clearly communicated and those in an office environment should be encouraged to reduce the number of face-to-face meetings where possible.

Review of the regulations in detail

The EAG proposes to carry out an in-depth review of the regulations and to provide its advice no later than Wednesday 28 July.

The group also referred to the instructive and informed blog on the detail of the regulations written by Professor Peter Edge which can be found [here](#)

About the Emergency Advisory Group

The Emergency Advisory Group is a committee, appointed by the Council of Ministers, consisting of a range of people from across the community with a broad range of skills and expertise. Its primary role is to consider matters referred to it by CoMIN and provide independent advice and analysis. All its members are unpaid volunteers.

The current membership is:

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| Hon Graham Cregeen, MHK | Minister for Justice and Home Affairs (Vice Chair) |
| Rob Mercer, MLC | Tynwald representative |
| Mrs Jacqueline Bridson | |
| Mr Steven Christian | |
| Mr Peter Davidson | |
| Professor Peter Edge | |
| Dr Rachel Glover | |
| Ms Julie Hotchkiss | |
| Mr John Spellman | |
| Mr Jonathan Wild | |

Correction notice - 26th July 2021

When this advice note was published on 23 July 2021, the seven day rate of infection in the Isle of Man was incorrectly stated as 277. This rate was the seven day average infection rate taken from the Government's dashboard and was not the seven day infection rate per 100,000 population. The figure has now been updated to be correct as at 22 July and the paragraph amended to insert the equivalent UK rate for comparison purposes.