

Emergency Advisory Group

General advice note

29th July 2021

Introduction

1. The EAG wishes to reiterate its previous advice that in view of the large and continued Covid case rate, mitigations are very urgently required to help reduce the spread of Covid. This will protect those who are vulnerable, with or without vaccination and help to reduce the impact on the economy by reducing the number of people who are unable to attend work because they are isolating.
2. The EAG also strongly restates its position in relation to improving communications on the effectiveness and importance of ventilation and the use of face masks in enclosed settings. By endorsing these proven measures, the Council of Ministers can support the public in making sensible choices to protect themselves and others.

Background

3. At its meeting on 28th July, the Emergency Advisory Group (EAG) considered the current situation in the Isle of Man with respect to Covid-19. The EAG reflected on its previous advice to CoMIN and considered issues which may emerge in the short to medium term. This was done in the context of the existing policy frameworks set out by the Council of Ministers. In particular the [Exit Framework](#) and the [Borders Framework](#).
4. The EAG's advice in relation to the exit framework is that the Council of Ministers should urgently revise the framework as it is out of date and potentially confusing to the public. For example, according to the Exit Framework, based on the UK 14 day case rate per 100,000 people, the Island should be at Borders level 4. This is clearly not the case and current actions may even be described as going against the will of Tynwald, which approved the framework, (at least in the public's eyes). There may well be other criteria being used to support the decision making but this is not available to EAG to consider or review.
5. Instead, the EAG believes that CoMIN should publish its updated strategy or roadmap for its current policy decisions in relation to living with Covid. This requires an explicit acceptance of the current methodology being deployed and how these policy decisions have been arrived at. This includes definitive benchmarks on when and how mitigating actions will be implemented. We consider this vital when considering risks which may arise in particular in relation to:
 - future Variants of Concern;
 - when capacity in the health service is threatened;
 - the disruption of supply lines; or
 - where the infection and death rate / profile become unacceptable.
 - the impact of "Long Covid"
6. It should set out clear guidance on when it may consider introducing contingency mitigation measures and the level of risk it is prepared to accept on behalf of the community. This would give clear advice to people on how they can manage their own level of risk. We understand that the assessment criteria used (e.g. ICU capacity) may be impacted by other factors so the use of a

traffic light system may be appropriate for some decision making criteria. However, this does not excuse the need to have a defined mitigation plan in place.

7. The EAG is happy to advise and be part of the development of such a roadmap if requested. The EAG also advises CoMIN to publish further information relating to the underlying data which supports its decision making. While the current Covid dashboard and vaccine dashboard provide useful information, the EAG believes more data is needed to help the public understand the rationale on which CoMIN is making decisions.
8. As the Keys and Tynwald are no longer sitting, it is important that CoMIN sets out its decision-making rationale clearly and transparently to the public.

EAG – July 2021

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:

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	Chair
Mr Jonathan Wild	