

**Minutes of a meeting of the Council of Minister's  
– Emergency Advisory Group ("EAG") –  
Held on Wednesday 28 July 2021 at 4.00pm**

**In the Department of Home Affairs Board Room and via MS Teams**

**Present:**

Mr John Spellman (Chair)  
Hon G Cregeen MHK, Minister for Justice and Home Affairs (Vice-Chair)  
Mr R Mercer MLC, Tynwald Representative (via MS Teams)  
Mrs Jacqueline Bridson (via MS Teams)  
Dr Rachel Glover (via MS Teams)  
Mr Steven Christian (via MS Teams) – from 5:15pm  
Mr Peter Davidson  
Ms Julie Hotchkiss (via MS Teams)  
Mr Jonathan Wild (via MS Teams)

**In Attendance:**

Mr D Davies, Chief Executive, Department of Home Affairs  
Mr C Phillips, Cabinet Office, Secretariat (via MS Teams)

**Apologies:** Professor Peter Edge (via MS Teams)

**Action**

**034/2021 Declarations of Interest or Conflict:**

Mr S Christian (a) married to the Hon Member for Douglas South;  
and (b) a declared interest in a Lateral Flow Testing entity.

**035/2021 Minutes of the meetings held on:**

**a) Wednesday 23 June 2021**

Approved for publication subject to minor amend.

**Action: Secretary to upload to website.**

**(Sec)**

**b) Thursday 22 July 2021**

Approved for publication.

**Action: Secretary to upload to website.**

**(Sec)**

**036/2021 Matters arising:**

**a) Acceleration of Vaccine :**

EAG noted a Government Press Release regarding bringing forward vaccination appointments and recent advice from the UK's Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on the vaccination of those aged 12 – 17.

## **b) Election of Chair & Group Function**

Mr John Spellman was proposed, seconded and confirmed as the Chair of the Emergency Advisory Group ("EAG").

The Chair proposed a rationalisation of the agenda – in order to streamline feedback to the Council of Ministers ("Council").

The following was discussed:

- Clarifying areas for which Council sought advice;
- Improving timescales and turnarounds in receiving advice requests and feeding back.
- Prioritising giving advice on areas requested – but retaining the right to issues by exception, where EAG considered of particular importance.

The Chair undertook to seek a meeting [with the Chief Minister/Chief Secretary] by way of introduction and improved dialogue.

**Action: Chair to seek a meeting with the Chief Minister/Chief Secretary.**

**(JS)  
(DD)**

## **c) Communications Strategy**

EAG advised they wished to meet with the Government Communications Team to discuss their feedback.

- The Chair undertook to attend this meeting – accompanied by interested available members.

**Action: Chair (& available members) to meet Government Communications Team – Officers to assist scheduling.**

**(JS)  
(DD /  
Sec)**

## **037/2021 Current Covid Strategy Assessment:**

### **a) Lateral Flow Tests – Consideration of Approach**

EAG considered a paper seeking EAG's view regarding Lateral Flow Tests – and inviting feedback to the Council of Ministers.

Discussion followed, covering the following:

- No support for reducing the number of LFTs [from 7 to 2] in an issued pack.
- LFTs were less accurate than PCRs, and the chances of missing positives were somewhat higher.
- The variance of accuracy of LFTs to-date, noting recent improvements and their wider role by way of reassurance.

- Potential scope for a PCR on Day 7 – where and if applicable – noting that the start and end of an incubation period was key.
- LFT test accuracy was improved if undertaken in accordance with instructions and accurately.
- Observations regarding distribution and consistency of supply were noted.
- Noted that there existed an option to upload the result of a voluntarily undertaken LFT online – for statistics – but this was not widely known.

In summary:

- a) EAG considered there remained a need for the IOM Government to collate information centrally.
- b) EAG broadly supported use of LFTs – as due to prevalence of cases, PCR alone was no longer practicable.
- c) EAG did not support the reduction in provided LFTs from 07 to 02.
- d) EAG considered greater clarity/guidance was required for sectors/industries, regarding for LFT use and best practice.
- e) EAG supported consideration of other distribution options.

**Action:**

**1. EAG Advice Note to the Council of Ministers to be prepared, reviewed, and submitted.**

**(DD)**

**2. Council of Ministers feedback to be reverted back to EAG.**

**(DD)**

**038/2021 EAG Member Submissions:**

- a) **Academy of Medical Sciences Report – CV19 Preparing for the Future & SEIR Model of Natural Wave**

EAG noted both for information.

- b) **Aerosol Transmission**

Paper: 008/2021

EAG noted a discussion paper on aerosol transmission.

The utility of masks, ventilation, simple but useful mitigations, repetition of messaging, and provision and highlighting of suitable guidance was to be raised with the IOMG communications team.

The undertaking of snapshot surveys with users/community – to inform and tailor messaging was suggested – alongside

highlighting existing pulse surveys undertaken by the IoM Chamber of Commerce.

**Action: EAG delegation will mention to communications team (pulse survey testing efficacy of public messaging).**

**(JS)**

## **038/2021 Standing Items**

### **a) Vaccine Supplies, Boosters and Preparation for Q4**

EAG advised of public demand for an update and clarity regarding vaccine booster shots. DD advised he was in dialogue with the Department of Health and Social Care in respect of an update.

### **b) Community Support**

EAG noted local charities' financial pressures, resilience and forward planning were relevant to ongoing community support – and noted this item could be revisited at a future meeting.

### **c) Economic Support**

EAG noted they required information from the Department of Enterprise for an economic sector overview – to assist EAG in giving its' feedback – this could be provided in confidence.

**Action: DfE to provide economic overview information to EAG in confidence.**

**(Sec)**

### **d) Mitigation & Outbreak Management Plan**

DD advised of a revised approach comprising engaging key stakeholders, capacity building, and a suite of potential policy options over the General Election "purdah" period.

EAG queried the lack of single strategic document with "triggers" or "levers" informing a response.

EAG acknowledged a measure of flex was needed, however requested that Council be advised of their views, i.e:

- 1.** The need to review and publish mitigation actions
- 2.** Consider an appropriate measure/plan to monitor actions; and make this available for evaluation.

## **039/2021 Any Other Business:**

### **a) Long Covid**

DD advised of a live proposal in respect of provision for specific support for Long Covid sufferers – for which EAG could be kept updated.

**b) Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 04 August 2021 – 4.00pm via MS Teams.

**The meeting closed at 05:33pm**

Signed: .....

Date: .....