

**Minutes of a meeting of the Council of Minister's
– Emergency Advisory Group ("EAG") –
Held on Thursday 30 September 2021 at 4.00pm**

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

Present:

Mr John Spellman (Chair)
Hon G Cregeen, Minister for Justice and Home Affairs (Vice-Chair) (via MS Teams)
Mr R Mercer MLC, Tynwald Representative (via MS Teams)
Mr Jonathan Wild
Mr Peter Davidson
Mr Steven Christian (via MS Teams)
Mrs Jacqui Bridson (via MS Teams)
Professor Peter Edge (via MS Teams)
Ms Julie Hotchkiss (via MS Teams)

In Attendance:

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

Apologies: Dr Rachel Glover

061/2021 Declarations of Interest or Conflict:

Standing declaration – Mr S Christian in respect of Mrs C Christian MHK

062/2021 Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 1 September 2021

- Having been previously circulated, the minutes of Wednesday 01 September 2021 were **approved** for upload subject to the following clarification:
- At Item 058/2021 – in lieu of the term "dated variants", insert "in circulation by the time of identification".

063/2021 Matters arising:

a) Long Covid Update:

- Marked as outstanding – noting ongoing work in respect of a business case for a relevant specialist.

b) Booster Programme Update:

- EAG were advised that the Department of Health and Social Care/Manx Care were confident the Vaccine Booster Programme was sufficiently prepared and progressing.
- The Chair clarified that EAG sought sight of general principles, to assure itself of preparations.

- EAG noted that the efficacy of certain vaccines (Pfizer) to prevent reinfection reduced over time, consequently, there existed a “window of opportunity” to rollout at pace.
- EAG further noted the JCVI¹ had revisited some aspects of their recommendations regarding delivery of the vaccination programme.
- Mr Lewin advised the dashboard was currently being updated to show additional cohorts and information.
- Mr Lewin noted EAG’s desire for bringing the plan into ‘one place’ over the coming months, for which he took an action to revert.
- EAG noted scope for the administration of vaccines via GP Group Practices, and potentially at school sites, where appropriate, with annual delivery and rollout a possibility.
- Assurance was sought and received that relevant targets and outputs would be captured both on the dashboard, and in the public arena.
- Prioritisation letters and communications were advised as underway – based on previous sequencing.
- The marginal benefit of allocating healthcare resource to a third vaccine booster programme – and the potential implications on other existing healthcare – was noted as requiring careful balance.

Action: Mr Lewin to revert to EAG with clarification regarding visibility of the Vaccine Booster Programme rollout – in ‘one place’.

c) C02 Monitors – Calibration:

- Mr Mercer MLC advised of a previously circulated note regarding accurate baseline calibration [of C02 monitors] and summarised the latest research.

Action: EAG queried the number of C02 devices in use, and a summary of their use.

d) Communications Dialogue:

- EAG noted that the Executive Director, External Relations, had offered to meet a delegation of the EAG on communication matters.

Action: DHA to arrange meeting between EAG and Communications.

064/2021 Current Covid Strategy Assessment:

a) Council Responses to EAG’s September 2021 Advice Note:

The following points were raised:

- EAG noted businesses and public settings, and the need to tailor appropriate advice for both.

¹ The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

- EAG noted an evolving position on facemasks and the need to remain flexible to suit circumstances.
- EAG considered an emphasis on individual choice messaging was perhaps over simplistic – noting exceptions to choice, e.g. compulsory attendance at school.
- Mr Lewin advised that the UK’s Colindale Laboratory continued to assist the Island with its identification of new variants via samples.
- EAG flagged the need for forward consideration of the TT races and safeguards around such (e.g. 40,000 visitors). Mr Lewin advised the Testing Strategy Group would actively consider such.

b) Council Paper 2021/416 – Further alignment of border pathways to mirror UK changes.

- Mr Lewin summarised the background, noting the UK had recently revisited categories (green/amber) and the urgency had somewhat lessened due to the proposed solution.
- EAG noted the UK’s position had changed, but in aligning pathways, there ought to be consistency between the Island and the UK.
- Mr Lewin noted the Island’s position (alongside Jersey/Guernsey) was to use the UK’s existing global analysis to inform a response.

065/2021 Any other business:

a) Query re recognition of Manx PCR Test:

- EAG noted anecdotal reports on the lack of recognition for Island administered PCR tests. Mr Lewin noted the Island’s NHS App access would show the outcome of negative tests – i.e. viewed within the NHS template/format, aiding wider recognition.

b) Dashboard Data – CV-19 Fatalities:

- EAG queried the timing of publication. Mr Lewin advised the sequencing of timings included GP certification with data captured in the weekly Public Health Directorate Intelligence Report.

c) Record of thanks to the outgoing Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

- The Chair recorded EAG’s thanks for the outgoing Minister for service rendered.

d) Date of next meeting

- Friday 22 October 2021, at 3.00pm

The meeting closed at 17:11

Signed:

Date: