

**Minutes of a meeting of the Council of Ministers’
– Emergency Advisory Group (“EAG”) –
Held on Thursday 20 January 2022 at 4.00pm**

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

Present:

Mr R Mercer MLC, Tynwald Representative (RM)
Mr Peter Davidson (PD)
Mrs Jacqui Bridson (JB)
Mr Jonathan Wild (JW)

MS TEAMS

Professor Peter Edge (PE)
Ms Julie Hotchkiss (JH)

In Attendance:

Mr D Davies, Chief Executive, Department of Home Affairs (DD)
Mr M Lewin, Chief Operating Officer, DfE (ML)
Mr P Boxer, Executive Director, External Relations (PB)

Secretariat:

Ms Sophia Dawson, DHA

Apologies:

Mr John Spellman (Chair) (JS)
Mr Steve Christian (SC)

Hon J P Poole-Wilson MHK, Minister for Justice and Home Affairs (Vice-Chair)(JPW)

001/2022	Declarations of conflict or interest
	None noted
	DD opened the meeting, saying that JS and JPW were unable to attend at short notice and offered their apologies. DD asked for nominations for a chair in the absence of the Chair and Vice-chair
002/2022	Appointment of temporary Chair
	JB nominated PD – All agreed
003/2022	Dr Glover - resignation
	DD noted that RG had tendered her resignation to the CM on 20 December All noted her contribution to the group and recognised her input on many matters since the Group’s inception.
004/2022	Minutes
	PD invited members to submit any comments on the minutes by email ahead of the next meeting.

005/2022	PD welcomed ML and PB and invited ML to present to group
	<p>PD welcomed decision by DfE on extension of co-payment for ventilation/air filtering schemes. Asked whether it could be extended to church halls/other settings run by voluntary/third sector – ML to consider</p> <p>Presentation attached</p> <p>ML provided an overview of CoMIN workshop that afternoon:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current Covid position shows infection rates decreasing to pre Omicron wave levels, although 'baseline' position may be slightly higher than previously 2. Hospital admissions remained low with very low or no admissions to ICU 3. Aim to transition towards treating Covid-19 as endemic 4. Overview of vaccination levels which were very high – although need to push uptake for 12-15 yr olds 5. Objective to remove legal framework around masks and other pandemic related restrictions 6. Objective to remove isolation and testing requirements except in certain healthcare settings 7. Noted significant contribution from Manx public in tackling current wave of Omicron, anecdotal increase in use of masks in non-regulated spaces, for example <p>PD invited comments</p> <p>PE – noted tension between relaxing of restrictions and the impact on those who had a lower risk appetite. Use of 'personal choice' phrase can be challenging because the freedoms of a large group may affect the personal choice of a smaller group who are vulnerable or anxious about infection. Should consider interplay with Equality Act</p> <p>JB asked about reinfection rates for Omicron</p> <p>ML said current advice followed UK Health Security Agency guidance which states any person infected is usually estimated to have protection against reinfection for 90 days</p> <p>ML continued:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. CoMin looking to make decision on ending existing level 2 framework in very near future 9. CoMin seeking view from EAG to inform longer term removal of all restrictions – possible decision in March in respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borders restrictions • border measures

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community measures • positive cases and isolation • contact tracing <p>PD stated that the CoMin decision to move to the LFT testing regime was had been seen to be correct and that the Island had been in the forefront of policy development in this area.</p> <p>PD suggested that it would be important for CoMIN to maintain a watching brief on vaccination developments and impact of waning vaccination efficacy.</p>
006/2022	Chair asked for email comments in relation to the above measures outlined by ML. ML would be circulating a further draft shortly.
007/2022	PD asked PB for overview on current comms strategy
	<p>PB Current development marks shift in comms strategy</p> <p>It was acknowledged that non-online messaging was key. Strategy for engaging older people included radio, bus advertising and newspaper ads.</p> <p>Current strategy will remain in place until March</p> <p>Now in development of new strategy for March onwards. Keen to seek input from EAG.</p> <p>Action – PB to email EAG bullets of strategy for consideration with the key messages for the different community segments, eg the Business Community, those in education, and so forth.</p> <p>JB commented that perhaps need to demonstrate vaccination status for travel could be a driver to increase uptake in vaccinations for younger people.</p> <p>Action – agreed to invite ML and PB to update next meeting</p>
008/2022	AOB
	<p>PE noted with RG absence, the group could usefully have a wider scientific input.</p> <p>JH asked whether group should consider other areas such as resilience, climate change and emergency planning.</p> <p>PE noted the Civil Contingencies bill was drafted and consulted upon but was yet to be taken forward.</p> <p>PD stated that group should seek a view from JPW as to role and scope of group in future.</p>

	Action – DD to seek a view from JPW as to future role of EAG and to ask whether CoMIN would require a new member to provide additional Scientific /Technical input.
009/2022	Next meeting
	Action – DD to circulate list of dates for next meeting