

Annex 1

This Annex contains 3 items of information, provided as extracts. They are provided as extracts because they are from emails and documents containing information outside the scope of your request.

Item 1:

Extract from briefing for First Minister for FMs/CDL call on 18 November at 16:30

KEY POINTS/ STEERING BRIEF

- For the festive period, and soon, we need to give people rules they will actually comply with.
- Key principles:
 - Clarity** – We need to give people clear rules which are seen to be fair.
 - Communication** – We need to provide simple communications that clearly articulate the rules, so that people are able to follow them.
 - Coherence** – The rules need to be coherent and make sense in a broader context (e.g. rules for hospitality etc)
- For example, to say that people from more than one household, with limits on numbers, may meet indoors once during the festive period, including travelling and staying the night where necessary.
- We need Four Nations coherence on this. Can we agree to get our officials to put a proposal to us next week?
- We continue to follow the approach set out in our Strategic Framework. As of Friday, 11 local authority areas across western and central Scotland will enter Level 4 restrictions for 3 weeks. Level 4 is intended to be short and sharp.
- This is specifically intended to have an impact in advance of the festive season and the challenging winter period.
- It would be helpful to understand what plans England have for the easing of lockdown restrictions from 2 December and how festive planning interacts with the tiers approach?

ADDITIONAL BRIEFING

ANNEX A – Festive planning

ANNEX C – Testing



ANNEX A – FESTIVE PERIOD

Cabinet Office proposal and official level discussions

Official level discussions this morning was light on detail, especially on what measures England is considering. Cabinet has outlined a possible way of easing of COVID protection measures for England, allowing a small number of households to 'bubble up' for the festive period, forming a discrete and exclusive social group. For announcement as England comes out of its lockdown on 2 December, although officials believe that there will be some form of announcement next week (date not specified)

- The aim is to allow people to enjoy a traditional family Christmas as far as possible.
- There is full acknowledgement of the complexity of the task and the difficulties of making policy changes on top of the pre-existing COVID policy frameworks already existing in the four nations.
- There is a significant degree of pragmatism among the four nations on behaviour over Christmas. This is based on the belief (supported by polling conducted so far) that there is a limited extent to which people's behaviour at Christmas can be managed or controlled.
- The period of easement would allow individuals to come out their present locked-down households and bubbles to form new bubbles, as well as travelling to family for a short period over Christmas day itself.
- This would be a cautious easement (e.g. 24-26/28 Dec), rather than an extended period, and it would include only Christmas.
- Strong appetite in Cabinet Office to apply measures nationally, so they are simple to implement, easy to communicate, and perceived to be fair to all.
- Focus on the period each side of Christmas to drive down infection rates. January and the post-Christmas period will require a substantial degree of anticipation and planning in itself.

Scottish Government considerations

We want as normal a Christmas as possible for the population, while minimising the risk to the public of increased infection rates from increased social activity and travel.

We need to give people rules they will comply with – and Four Nations coherence is important here.

Officials are ready to engage with 4 Nations on the detail of proposals.

This is wider than simply looking at the socialising measures. We need to address challenges from across the policy spectrum and ensure a 4 harms approach is taken. The levels approach set out in our Strategic Framework provides a good framework to do this as it is flexible and can be applied regionally and nationally. Strategic Advice about the festive period will be sent to the First Minister early next week, including an update on discussions with Cabinet Office.

Positions on travel restrictions - England, Wales and Northern Ireland

England

From 5 November, English regulations require people to stay at home with limited exemptions which do not include going on holiday. This will largely prevent non-essential cross border travel from England to Scotland.

There is no ban on international travel per se, but the stay-at-home restriction prevents people going on holiday abroad. Arrivals are subject to broadly the same quarantine regime as for Scotland, though sometimes different views have been taken about the country/region exception list.

Wales

Travel restrictions under the “circuit breaker” lockdown were broadly similar to those described above for England. That ended on 9 November with Wales returning to a lower level of restrictions that allow travel within Wales and holiday accommodation. However, a ban on all non-essential travel into and out of Wales, including to countries overseas, will be maintained. Wales also has international travel quarantine requirements similar to England and Scotland.

Previously Wales had bans on non-essential travel in and out of individual locked-down local authority areas, including between adjacent areas with the same restriction, and to and from high-prevalence areas elsewhere in the UK, enforced by police spot checks and if necessary FPNs. Welsh officials reported high levels of public compliance.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland does not have travel restrictions as such, but it has been a requirement in law from 16 October for people not to stay overnight away from home without a reasonable excuse. That is accompanied by complete closure of tourist accommodation within Northern Ireland. These measures effectively preclude tourist travel to or from the rest of the UK. (England had a similar sleep-at-home legal requirement nationally as part of its initial exit from the spring lock-down, and slightly longer for Leicester, but that was repealed in the summer.) An international travel quarantine requirement is similar to that in England and Scotland.



ANNEX C – MASS TESTING

Suggested points to make

- We are planning to pilot neighbourhood mass testing within areas of stubborn prevalence in early December, with a view to extending this in January.
- Continuing a collaborative approach, sharing lessons between each nation as we learn them, will help maximise impact on transmission rates.
- Early clarity from the UK on what practical support will be made available through the national testing programme would be welcome.

Background

England: Our current understanding is that the UK Government is still planning to begin regional testing on 2nd Dec when England is due to end lockdown. However, they are looking to spread this over a 6-8 week period.

Wales: We are working with colleagues in the Welsh Government to better understand planning for whole town testing of Merthyr Tydfil (population 60,000) from 21 Nov to 12 Dec. This is likely to involve the deployment of around 140 military personal.

Northern Ireland: Are supportive of the concept but are investigating a delivery model that would not involve use of the military. We are in close contact with the officials developing their plans.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health & Social Care will be setting out our plans for geographic mass testing to Parliament next week. This is expected to:

- Draw on lessons from the ongoing pilot in Liverpool, and imminent plans for whole town testing in locations such as Merthyr Tydfil.
- Be focused on around eight neighbourhoods (3-7,000 people) at a time in areas now within Level 4, who have stubbornly high levels of prevalence. Neighbourhoods would be identified by local partners.
- Bring together existing (e.g. Mobile Testing Units using PCR) and new (e.g. Lateral Flow Devices deployed through Asymptomatic Test Sites) capabilities. We are also considering where waste water testing could add value.
- Take place in the first week of December, with proposals for larger scale and more sustained mass testing in January being developed.

A Military Liaison Officer (MLOs) has been assigned to work with officials to identify where military aid may be necessary. Further MLOs are being requested through a MACA to support planning at a Board level and should be in place by Monday.

Colleagues in relevant Local Authorities and NHS Boards have been informally consulted and indicated their support. Full briefings are being scheduled for Thursday. Officials are also being briefed today on emerging lessons from Liverpool. Analysts are looking at potential geographies/neighbourhoods that could be in scope.

Item 2:
Extract from briefing for First Minister for FMs/CDL call on 9 December at 17:15

**APPENDIX - Modelling Covid 19 across 4 UK nations
09 December 2020**

Purpose

1. This short paper updates the modelling results for the four nations of the UK. This shows current estimates of R_t , the number of new infectious people per day and daily deaths.

Method

2. The Scottish Government uses publicly available NRS data on the number of Covid-19 related deaths up to 01 December for Scotland.
3. Academic groups reporting to SAGE through SPI-M are using various modelling methods. Their results, as presented on 09 December, are summarised below. These are not finalised and released publically until after the SAGE meeting tomorrow afternoon.

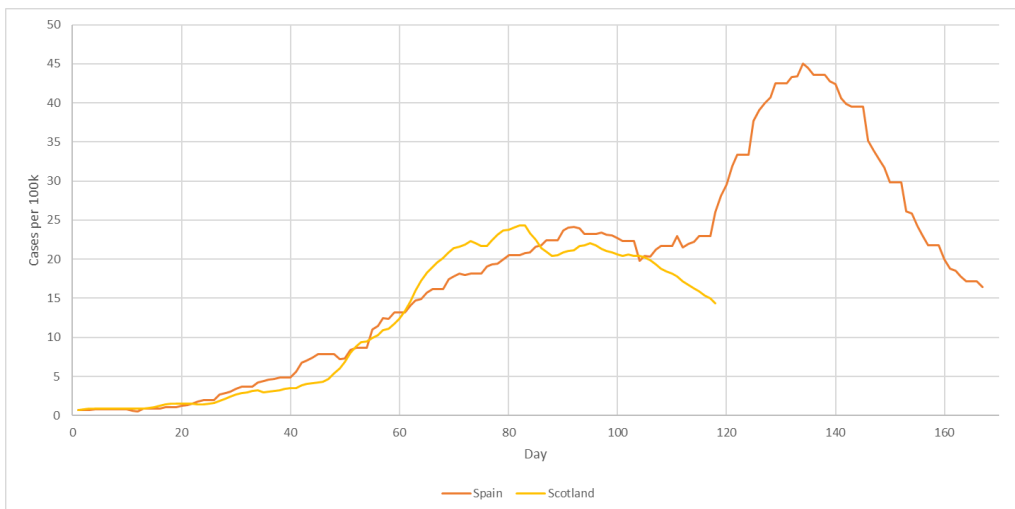
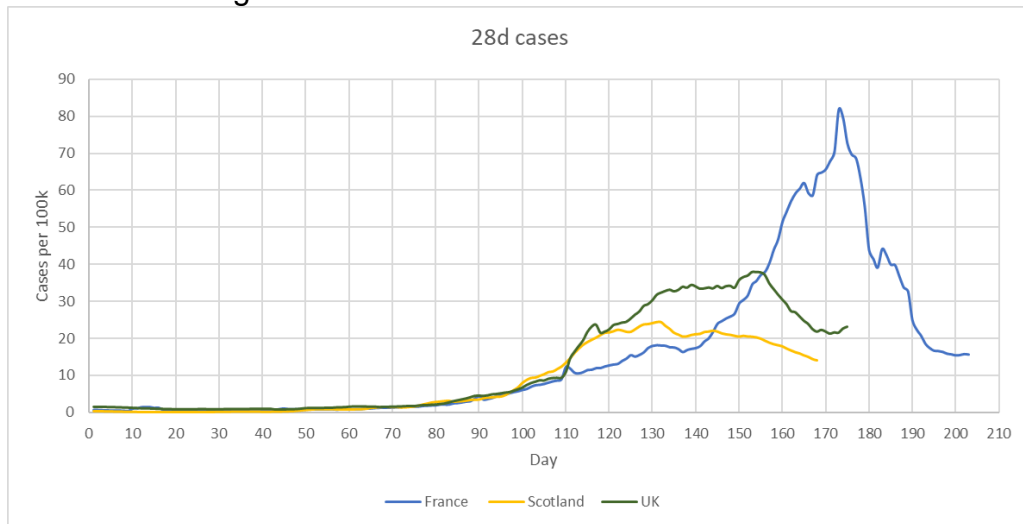
Estimates of R_t

4. The preliminary view of SAGE, taking into account all UK modelling groups presenting a value for Scotland on 09 December, is that the overall **R_t in Scotland is between 0.7 and 0.9**. This figure is subject to revision by SAGE, but the values for Scotland are not expected to change. The estimate of the consensus statement for the previous week of 02 December was Scotland was between 0.8 and 1.0.
5. The preliminary table below shows the variations in R_t across the UK nations.

	Lower limit	Upper limit	Change in the last week
Scotland	0.7	0.9	Lower and upper limits decreasing
England	0.8	1.0	Lower and upper limits constant
Wales	0.9	1.2	Lower and upper limits increasing
NI	0.8	1.1	Lower limit constant and upper limit increasing

International Comparisons

6. The epidemic trajectory in Scotland, expressed as a rolling 7-day average of new cases per 100,000 population, was following that seen in France, lagged by 4 weeks and with a 6 week lag behind Spain. Given that cases in Scotland have fallen in recent weeks, this comparison is becoming less credible. See charts below.



Daily Deaths

7. Estimated number of people who will die each day with Covid (95% confidence intervals in parentheses), from Scottish Government modelling.

Date	Scotland	England	Wales	Northern Ireland
23/11/2020	25 (22 - 29)	332 (300 - 369)	29 (25 - 33)	12 (10 - 14)
30/11/2020	24 (21 - 29)	338 (298 - 384)	29 (25 - 33)	12 (11 - 15)
07/12/2020	23 (19 - 29)	342 (294 - 398)	28 (24 - 34)	13 (11 - 16)
14/12/2020	22 (18 - 28)	343 (286 - 413)	28 (23 - 34)	14 (11 - 17)
21/12/2020	21 (16 - 27)	342 (277 - 426)	27 (21 - 33)	14 (11 - 18)

Growth Rates

8. SAGE are producing consensus estimates of daily growth rates of the epidemic across the 4 Nations. These show the epidemic is declining at varying rates across the UK.

	Daily Growth Rate	Lower limit	Upper limit	Change in the last week
England	-1%	-2%	0%	Daily Growth rate and lower limit increasing with upper limit constant
Wales	2%	-1%	4%	Daily Growth rate, lower limit and upper limit increasing
Scotland	-3%	-5%	-2%	Daily Growth rate, lower and upper limits decreasing
NI	-1%	-3%	1%	Daily Growth rate, lower and upper limits increasing

SPI-M Estimates of Daily new infections

9. SPI-M produce consensus estimates of the number of new daily infections for Scotland.

Consensus Date	Estimated new daily infections per 100,000			Estimated new daily infections		
	Mid	Lower	Upper	Mid	Lower	Upper
09/09/2020	5	0	13	270	0	700
16/09/2020	11	1	22	620	60	1,175
23/09/2020	20	8	32	1,090	460	1,720
30/09/2020	52	21	83	2,880	1,160	4,600
07/10/2020	105	35	176	5,750	1,890	9,600
14/10/2020	222	96	347	12,100	5,200	18,900
21/10/2020	242	154	330	13,200	8,400	18,000
28/10/2020	233	130	337	12,700	7,100	18,400
04/11/2020	153	90	216	8,400	4,900	11,800
11/11/2020	98	46	150	5,400	2,500	8,200
18/11/2020	82	42	122	4,500	2,300	6,700
25/11/2020	86	57	115	4,700	3,100	6,300
02/12/2020	63	44	82	3,400	2,400	4,500
09/12/2020	57	39	76	3,100	2,100	4,200

10. The daily number of new people becoming infected is cumulative. Should the most recent consensus estimate be reflective of the preceding week, up to 29,000 people may have been infected between 03 – 09 December.

Item 3:

Extract from briefing for First Minister for FMs/CDL call on 13 January at 17:15

Modelling Covid 19 across 4 UK nations 13 January 2021

Purpose

11. This short paper updates the modelling results for the four nations of the UK. This shows current estimates of R_t , the number of new infectious people per day and daily deaths.

Method

12. The Scottish Government uses publicly available NRS data on the number of Covid-19 related deaths up to 6 January for Scotland.

13. Academic groups reporting to SAGE through SPI-M are using various modelling methods. Their results, as presented on 13 January, are summarised below. These are not finalised and released publically until after the SAGE meeting tomorrow afternoon.

Estimates of R_t

14. The preliminary view of SAGE, taking into account all UK modelling groups presenting a value for Scotland on 13 January, is that the overall R_t in Scotland is between 1 and 1.4. This figure is subject to revision by SAGE, but the values for Scotland are not expected to change. The estimate of the consensus statement last week for Scotland was between 0.9 and 1.3.

15. The preliminary table below shows the variations in R_t across the UK nations.

	Lower limit	Upper limit	Change in the last week
Scotland	1	1.4	Lower limit increasing and upper limit increasing
England	1.1	1.3	Lower limit constant and upper limit decreasing
Wales	0.8	1.1	Lower limit constant and upper limit constant
NI	0.9	1.3	Lower limit decreasing and upper limit decreasing

Daily Deaths

16. Estimated number of people who will die each day with Covid (95% confidence intervals in parentheses), from Scottish Government modelling.

Date	Scotland	England	Wales	Northern Ireland
21/12/2020	31 (27 - 38)	470 (407 - 567)	29 (18 - 38)	13 (11 - 15)
28/12/2020	29 (25 - 38)	492 (414 - 626)	28 (15 - 40)	14 (12 - 17)
04/01/2021	27 (22 - 38)	509 (418 - 685)	27 (11 - 42)	14 (12 - 18)
11/01/2021	25 (19 - 37)	526 (416 - 739)	26 (9 - 44)	14 (12 - 19)
18/01/2021	23 (16 - 36)	540 (413 - 797)	25 (7 - 46)	14 (12 - 21)

Growth Rates

17. SAGE are producing consensus estimates of daily growth rates of the epidemic across the 4 Nations. These show the epidemic is declining at varying rates across the UK.

	Daily Growth Rate	Lower limit	Upper limit	Change in the last week
England	3%	1%	4%	Daily growth rate decreasing, lower limit constant and upper limit decreasing
Wales	-2%	-4%	1%	Daily growth rate decreasing, lower limit constant and upper limit constant
Scotland	3%	0%	6%	Daily growth rate increasing, lower limit increasing and upper limit increasing
NI	1%	-2%	4%	Daily growth rate decreasing, lower limit decreasing and upper limit decreasing

SPI-M Estimates of Daily new infections

18. SPI-M produce consensus estimates of the number of new daily infections for Scotland.

Consensus Date	Estimated new daily infections per 100,000			Estimated new daily infections		
	Mid	Lower	Upper	Mid	Lower	Upper
04/11/2020	153	90	216	8,400	4,900	11,800
11/11/2020	98	46	150	5,400	2,500	8,200
18/11/2020	82	42	122	4,500	2,300	6,700
25/11/2020	86	57	115	4,700	3,100	6,300
02/12/2020	63	44	82	3,400	2,400	4,500
09/12/2020	57	39	76	3,100	2,100	4,200
16/12/2020	96	49	144	5,200	2,700	7,900
22/12/2020	80	35	125	4,400	1,900	6,800
06/01/2020	117	47	188	6,400	2,600	10,300
13/01/2020	175	89	262	9,600	4,900	14,300

19. The daily number of new people becoming infected is cumulative. Should the most recent consensus estimate be reflective of the preceding week, up to 100,000 people may have been infected between 7– 13 January.

Categories of individuals in Scotland who received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccination by eligibility criteria and week

Week ending	Categories of individuals who received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccination				
	Healthcare worker	Care Home Staff	Care Home Resident	Social Care Worker	Other
13 Dec 20	15,199	2,530	12	1,245	137
20 Dec 20	27,274	6,653	4,919	1,181	827
27 Dec 20	19,772	6,196	6,957	800	1,468
03 Jan 21	12,138	3,485	4,809	447	1,625
10 Jan 21	27,571	6,044	6,790	4,238	3,919
TOTAL	101,954	24,908	23,487	7,911	7,976

‡ Individuals can appear in more than one eligibility criteria.

*Other category includes: Age 80 & over, Age-Group (if an individual has been identified as being in one of the current priority areas), Care At Home, Clinically At Risk Age 16 – 64, Clinically Extremely Vulnerable/Shielding, Shielding Household, Unpaid Carer, Other. Note: Coverage data by eligibility criteria cannot currently be reported as work is ongoing to establish robust denominator data for these eligibility categories.

Scottish Government will publish information on the estimated population in each JCVI priority group to allow users to track progress of the vaccination programme. For example, for JCVI priority group 1 which includes all residents in a care home for older adults and their carers, the Scottish Care Home Safety Huddle Tool can be used to provide an estimate of the number of residents and staff in care homes. Latest data estimates there are 30,000 residents and 45,000 staff in care homes for older adults.

Table published 13 Jan 21 by Public Health Scotland – COVID-19 Statistical Report

Annex 2

REASONS FOR NOT PROVIDING INFORMATION

Section 28 – relations within the United Kingdom

An exemption under section 28 of FOISA (formulation or development of government policy) applies to some of the information requested because it relates to relations within the United Kingdom.

This exemption is subject to the ‘public interest test’. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of open, transparent and accountable government, and to inform public debate. However, there is a greater public interest in high quality policy and decision-making, and in the properly considered implementation and development of policies and decisions. This means that Ministers and officials need to be able to consider all available options and to debate those rigorously, to fully understand their possible implications. Their candour in doing so will be affected by their assessment of whether the discussions on Covid will be disclosed in the near future, when it may affect relations within the United Kingdom.

Section 30(b)(i) – free and frank provision of advice

An exemption under section 30(b)(i) of FOISA (free and frank provision of advice) applies to some of the information requested. This exemption applies because disclosure would, or would be likely to, inhibit substantially the free and frank provision of advice. This exemption recognises the need for officials to have a private space within which to provide free and frank advice to Ministers before the Scottish Government reaches a settled public view. Disclosing the content of free and frank advice on Covid will substantially inhibit the provision of such advice in the future, particularly because these discussions are still ongoing and decisions have not been taken, and these discussions relate to a sensitive or important issue such as Covid.

This exemption is subject to the ‘public interest test’. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of open, transparent and accountable government, and to inform public debate. However, there is a greater public interest in allowing a private space within which officials can provide full and frank advice to Ministers, as part of the process of exploring and refining the Government’s policy position on question testing, until the Government as a whole can adopt a policy that is sound and likely to be effective. This private thinking space is essential to enable all options to be properly considered, based on the best available advice, so that good policy decisions can be taken. Premature disclosure is likely to undermine the full and frank discussion of issues between Ministers and officials, which in turn will undermine the quality of the policy making process, which would not be in the public interest.

Section 30(b)(ii) – free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation

An exemption under section 30(b)(ii) of FOISA (free and frank exchange of views) applies to some of the information requested. This exemption applies because disclosure would, or would be likely to, inhibit substantially the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation. This exemption recognises the need for Ministers and officials to have a private space within which to discuss and explore options before the Scottish Government reaches a settled public view. Disclosing the content of free and frank discussions on Covid will substantially inhibit such discussions in the future, particularly because these discussions are still ongoing and decisions have not been taken, and these discussions relate to a sensitive or important issue such as Covid.

This exemption is subject to the ‘public interest test’. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of open, transparent and accountable government, and to inform public debate. However, there is a greater public interest in allowing Ministers and officials a private space within which to explore and refine the Government’s policy position on question testing, until the Government as a whole can adopt a policy that is sound and likely to be effective. This private thinking space is essential to enable all options to be properly considered, so that good policy decisions can be taken. Premature disclosure is likely to undermine the full and frank discussion of issues between Ministers and officials, which in turn will undermine the quality of the policy making process, which would not be in the public interest.

