

Joint Statement Following Covid-19 Quad Meeting

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney today jointly chaired a conference call with the First Minister Arlene Foster, deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill, Health Minister Robin Swann and Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly to discuss the ongoing response to COVID-19 on the island of Ireland.

All participants noted that the recent increase in cases of COVID-19, including in border areas, has reinforced the immense importance of coordination and cooperation to address the virus across both jurisdictions.

Participants agreed that, as this virus does not respect borders, there is a clear need to cooperate effectively North-South and East-West to respond to COVID-19, and take a coordinated approach wherever possible to public health measures and messages.

They welcomed the ongoing contact and cooperation between the respective Health Ministers, working in close conjunction with the Chief Medical Officers.

There was agreement to intensify further the regular and ongoing contact between the UK Government, the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive. North South cooperation on the island and, where possible and practical, consistency of approach, in response to COVID-19, will be essential for the mutual benefit of everyone on the island of Ireland.

They also agreed to issue the following joint public appeal:

“We would like to appeal to everyone to strictly adhere to the public health guidelines to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We all have the power to stop this virus taking hold in our communities and towns.

“We would like to sincerely thank the public for playing their part in following the public health advice. We owe it to our health workers and, above all, to the most vulnerable in our communities, to continue to do our part.

“We have suppressed this virus once, and we can do it again.

“Follow the public health advice. Stay safe and help save lives”