

Key points discussed with the Stakeholders – 28th October

Minister discusses:

Minister starts the meeting by welcoming the visitor economy and retail stakeholders to go over the 21-day review.

- 1/50 people are Covid positive – risk for customers and staff if we can't get people to do the right thing. Covid pass to reduce risk.
- FM will discuss tomorrow, current measures e.g. importance of vaccination, face coverings, WFM message. Maximising the current interventions, reiterating the way we want the public to adhere with as less interventions and to avoid going to alert level 1.
- Household transmission is still the likeliest sources of transmission then schools and work with 12% traced back to retail and 6% traced back to hospitality and others.
- Thanks the venues who have introduced the pass already, gone quite smoothly e.g. football games.
- Some businesses can adapt, cost to this and WG would need to provide additional support and this could be the reality of surviving.
- Importance of messaging from WG.
- Not at the same point of other European countries introducing Covid pass significantly and is widely used in hospitality in France, Italy and Ireland.
- Introduce the pass for cinemas, theatres and concert halls from 15th November. On the basis, indoor setting where people are together for a long period of time. Setting where you have to have checks anyway.
- Considering if the pass to be introduced more broadly in hospitality, 3 weeks period – having to consider this about the rates and harm.
- Headline rates will start to decline but pressure in the health and care system start to increase.

Summary of Key Feedback

- Members predicted the Covid pass will get rolled out in the future, prefer the pass rather than reintroducing the social distancing. Will the smallest venues in hospitality be exempt?
- Problem is with public understanding what restrictions apply and where can we get direct information from WG to use on doorways.
- Budget announcement yesterday, consequential repercussions financially to be considered, appeal for business rates to be at least the same level in Wales and in England. Better incentive of the 50% from April and something in the short term on partnership maintaining level of jobs across the industry.
- November last year, wished we gone into a lockdown earlier. Rather have a Covid pass at a chance of squashing the virus to keep businesses going forward. Sooner rather than later, not a popular choice but helps businesses surviving by not going to alert level 1.

- Reiteration on businesses rates and that the sooner we know to plan for the future.
- Extent on which looking at reducing the 6 months to 5 months booster programme. The 40-60 year olds will have come up to their 6 months around Christmas which is a vulnerable point – earlier boosted the better.
- The symptoms need to be kept up to date, problems in England, which seem to be classic symptoms for Covid presently however, are not symptoms on the official websites, difficulties diagnosing what is Covid what is cold.
- Film industry find it confusing seeing disparity across venues. Individual risk assessments, very little guidance specific on the sub-sectors and weighing up the interventions. Appreciate if the guidance was introduced to be better informed when doing individual risk assessments.
- Difficult to keep up with marketing materials and cost associated to inform audiences, wonder if there are scales of economy to be had with WG providing assets to implement these measures and are kept up to date sharing with the public.
- Disappointed to see cinemas singled out for the Covid pass in an uneven playing field. People will now go to the pub as it's easier. This has happened in European and admissions have dropped 50%. Leisure didn't seem to feature in areas of transmissions recorded, what evidence is being based on why cinemas have been decided to be one of the areas for Covid pass.
- Likely impact on admissions for cinemas, what financial support might be in place for the venues impacted.

Summary of Minister feedback

- Takes on board that the Covid pass is preferred to be rolled out to more venues rather than introducing social distancing.
- In relation to the business rates and budget need to understand the whole package, genuinely looking how to support businesses. Understand the need and will be discussing with Rebecca Evans, Finance Minister. Need to look at the Business Rate Relief in England and publish a budget before the end of the calendar year. Will discuss about signals on business rates.
- No decisions on smaller venues being exempt.
- Challenge of people coming forward for the booster, should be invited after 6 months. Slightly ahead of the rest of the UK with the take up.
- Can never make a choice where everyone is happy, can't please everyone. Need to lessen the risk and do it in a way of least harm whilst maintaining where we are.
- Will need to look at the guidance to see how WG can help with advertising to do the right thing. Need to be easy to communicate and enforce with comms.
- Leisure counts for 6% of the transmission rates. WG wanted to introduce the pass in a setting, which didn't require additional checks. This will keep the businesses running as they have to check for tickets and then it's just an additional check with the Covid pass and isn't restrictive. If there is evidence of decrease in trade then would look at business support.
- Important to continue to talk once the pass is introduced.

Deputy Minister feedback

- Clarifies about concert halls.
- Primarily venues that are indoor where you can mitigate to an extent. Least amount of burden, Covid pass is an obvious way of doing that. Have to show ticket to gain entry, additional burden is just showing the pass, which isn't difficult.
- The extra level of mitigation that was reasonable in an indoor setting not onerous on venue or customers and was preferable to reintroduce social distancing.
- Important to point out that mitigations for indoor venues, majority of public place have a requirement for face coverings. Decision has been made that that is not the case in cinemas, concert halls and theatres as people also eat in those venues. The additional mitigations are taking that into account without introducing measures impacting the income of those venues.

Thanks all and appreciate the honesty in the conversations as it does help with making the decisions.