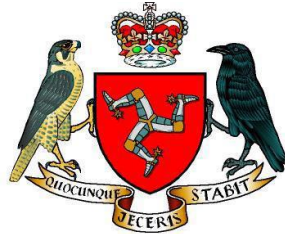


GD 2024/0049



Isle of Man
Government

Reilrys Ellan Vannin

**Council of Ministers' Further Response –
Isle of Man Independent Covid Review Report
By Kate Brunner KC**

June 2024

To the President of Tynwald, and the Hon Council and Keys in Tynwald assembled

As we return to Tynwald with a further update regarding the [Isle of Man Independent Covid Review Report](#), as ever, the first thought when recalling the pandemic is those people we lost, those who were bereaved and those in our community who are still living with the effects of COVID-19 in their daily lives.

The Independent Review was commissioned by Government and Tynwald so that we could learn from the pandemic experience and improve our preparations for any such future event.

Acknowledging the overarching conclusion by Kate Brunner KC that the Government response to COVID-19 was “broadly successful”, our initial response nonetheless accepted all thirty one recommendations, whilst recognising the need for a more detailed assessment of the financial and resourcing implications would be needed. This second report follows on from the initial response and provides that assessment.

In particular, Council of Ministers recognises the urgency of recommendations one to six of the review, which focussed on emergency planning. The UK National Risk Register for 2023 identified the chance of another pandemic as the highest risk faced (between 5% and 25% likelihood and with significant national impact) in the next five years. The appendix to this response has been prepared by the Department for Home Affairs and sets out a comprehensive way forward on emergency planning. The main part of the report sets out a further response to each recommendation, following the same structure as the paper supporting the debate in Tynwald in April this year for ease of reference.

The Council of Ministers acknowledges and welcomes the intent of all 31 of the Review’s recommendations. Implementation is dependent upon prioritising funding within the confines of the Medium Term Financial Plan. Where funding is required this year and over coming years, Departments will first seek to make allocations within Departmental plans/budgets, or where possible link in to existing initiatives or funding streams. A significant amount of progress can and will be made within existing budgets. However, where neither is possible, business cases will be submitted to Treasury at the appropriate time.

The Council of Ministers proposes to track the actions set out in this response proactively. It was a deliberate decision to include a new chapter in this year’s Island Plan to acknowledge the value of the Independent Isle of Man Covid Review Report, and we will monitor delivery as part of our Island Plan reporting.

Our journey through the pandemic has been one of solidarity and perseverance. The insights from this report will be instrumental in shaping policies and strategies that not only address the immediate needs but also fortify our systems against future crises. In this response, Council aims to outline the steps we will take to implement the recommendations, enhance our preparedness, and ensure that the lessons learned translate into tangible improvements for our Island.

**Hon A L Cannan MHK
Chief Minister**

Government Response by Recommendation

Emergency Planning

R1	Emergency plans should be given careful and formal consideration at the start of any emergency, and deviation from the plan should be explicitly minuted and agreed. In a prolonged emergency CoMin should have oversight and ownership of the emergency command and advisory structure.
Commentary	As outlined in the initial response to April Tynwald, the Department of Home Affairs has progressed multiple areas of work to enhance the Island's Emergency Planning provisions and has identified several further activities required to meet the recommendations in the Brunner report. An outline plan to address the future of emergency planning is included as an appendix to this report.
Response	Accept
Lead	Department of Home Affairs

R2	A revised Infectious Disease Pandemic Plan should now be drawn up and exercised, including at a political level.
Commentary	As outlined in the initial response in April, the Department of Home Affairs has progressed multiple areas of work to enhance the Island's Emergency Planning provisions. An outline plan to address the future of emergency planning is included in the appendix. It includes revised plans and increased numbers of exercises.
Response	Accept
Lead	Department of Home Affairs

R3	A cross-Government programme of resilience assessment and resilience building should be developed and prioritised.
Commentary	As outlined in the April report, the Department of Home Affairs has progressed multiple areas of work to enhance the Island's Emergency Planning provisions and an outline plan to address the future of emergency planning which will aim to address recommendation 3 (working with the Chief Executive Officer (Isle of Man Government)) is included in the appendix.
Response	Accept
Lead	Chief Executive Officer (Isle of Man Government) - working with Department of Home Affairs.

R4	The Emergency Planning Unit should be required to prepare an annual report for presentation to CoMin and Tynwald
Commentary	The work of the Emergency Planning Unit is currently included in Department Plans that are subject to motion to be received by Tynwald and updates that are published. An outline plan to address the future of emergency planning which will aim to address recommendation 4 can be referred to in the appendix.
Response	Accept
Lead	Department of Home Affairs

R5	The capacity of the emergency planning function should be increased and the arrangements for monitoring compliance should be strengthened.
Commentary	As outlined in the initial response in April, the Department of Home Affairs has progressed multiple areas of work to enhance the Island's Emergency Planning provisions. A further Assistant Emergency Planning Officer role has been introduced, but further resource is required for any additional roles, which is covered in the outline plan. An outline plan to address the future of emergency planning which will aim to address recommendation 5 can be referred to in the appendix.
Response	Accept
Lead	Department of Home Affairs

Ways of Working

R6	Government should create a 'Pandemic Ways of Working Plan' as part of its emergency planning.
Commentary	As outlined in the initial response in April, the Department of Home Affairs has progressed multiple areas of work to enhance the Island's Emergency Planning provisions and other initiatives will support the delivery of such ways of working. An outline plan to address the future of emergency planning which will aim to address recommendation 6 can be referred to in the appendix.
Response	Accept
Lead	Department of Home Affairs

R7	Government should seek to retain a number of effective pandemic working practices
Commentary	<p>It is increasingly important to enable the public service workforce to be agile and work remotely at different times, not only during a crisis such as a pandemic, but also for greater efficiency and to be able to respond better to customer needs.</p> <p>As such, several practices accelerated across Isle of Man Government and the wider public service during Covid have been sustained, and further consolidation is planned.</p> <p>Since the pandemic, Government Departments, Boards and Offices have retained flexible and remote working practices wherever feasible in line with business need. Government Technology Services, in Cabinet Office, is proactively replacing IT hardware, which should continue to maintain remote work both in regular operations and during emergencies. There are several examples of progress in this space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All laptops in use by teachers in the Department of Education, Sport and Culture have been replaced with the latest models with in-built remote access features. • Maintaining internet coverage; GTS have contracted with a new supplier to provide internet coverage; this provides resilient links and increased bandwidth. • GTS hardware replacement policy has changed to a focus on mobile devices with a "laptop first" mentality. That means wherever possible desktop devices are replaced with a mobile alternative. • The remote access technology (VPN) has been completely replaced and has changed from an optional opt in service to an always on, always available service that is installed on all mobile devices by default. • GTS is exploring with Treasury changing the way that hardware replacements are funded. The strategy is to move from replacement at failure to proactive replacement with an appropriate funding mechanism. <p>Second, a new People Strategy will be developed in the next year as part of the Chief Executive's public service modernisation programme, to respond to a wide array of changes in how we work, our staff profile, and emerging technologies. This will include updates to flexible and remote working.</p> <p>Third, Treasury regularly reviews, assesses and updates its processes for financial management and oversight and will lead on any reviews to procurement procedures and financial management / business case processes. The processes engaged by Treasury in the pandemic were</p>

	within the existing framework, which allows flexibility where this is required. The Department for Enterprise and Treasury continue to work closely together.
Response	Accept
Lead	Cabinet Office - working with Treasury
Milestones / Dates	Not Applicable

R8	There should be a Chief Information Officer, whether or not Government moves to a single legal entity
Commentary	<p>The Independent Covid Review Report has identified that 'throughout the Review's processes of evidence gathering, difficulties created by data gaps and poor records management were noted'. References to records management and capturing data are also included in a number of other recommendations.</p> <p>The need for significant improvements to records management is accepted. The proposed focus is on progressing those improvements.</p> <p>The Office of Cyber Security & Information Assurance (OCSIA) is part of the Department of Home Affairs and provides a central point within Government for advice and guidance on data protection, freedom of information and information governance, including records management.</p> <p>OCSIA is responsible for advising across Government on data sharing and data protection compliance. It works with Departments, Boards and Office to identify and resolve blocks in information sharing across Government. Working with the Public Records Office (PRO), OCSIA has issued guidance on records management together with support for records retention¹.</p> <p>OCSIA, the PRO and Government Technology Services (GTS) will now work together to develop a records management improvement programme. This discovery phase will run for a 3-month period and will cost approximately £10,000 to provide more detailed recommendations and costings required for a whole Government information and records management improvement programme. This cost and any subsequent delivery costs will be subject to a bid to the Transformation Fund as cannot be funded through existing revenue budget.</p> <p>The proposed programme of work will likely require significant funding and will focus on ensuring good records management, considering areas</p>

¹ <https://csc.gov.im/media/vv5azacm/iomg-information-and-records-management-policy.pdf>

	<p>such as decision-making as a top priority and as highlighted by the Independent Covid Review; the work will also initially focus on a pilot department (s) – with the intention then for the resulting model and approach being shared with other Departments.</p> <p>OCSIA proposes to give priority to augmenting and accelerating improvements to records management within the existing information assurance framework to address concerns identified in recommendation 8, which will require ongoing effort. This is identified as the best use of resources in the first instance.</p> <p>The requirement for a Chief Information Officer with specialism in data protection regulation will remain under consideration.</p>
Response	Accept in principle, pending further review and subsequent funding that will be required beyond the discovery phase.
Lead	Department of Home Affairs (OCSIA) - working with Cabinet Office (GTS)
Milestones / Dates	<p>Within first 3 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research, scoping, engagement with stakeholders and define a recommended approach including additional costs required by October 2024. • Identify a pilot department (s) to prove concept of new records management approach. <p>After 3 months discovery phase and subject to further funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible procurement exercise. • Creation of new records management approach with pilot department(s). • Record managers identified and training provided for new approach. • Adoption of new approach. • Migration of existing records. • Identify lessons and recommendations for approach elsewhere in Government.

R9	Government should develop and pursue a programme to address culture improvement and build a one organisation ethos which is led from the top
Commentary	<p>Our Island Plan⁵ sets out the absolute need for a one Government approach. This is an approach that requires everyone across the public service to have certain considerations at the forefront of public service delivery. Our culture should be one of People First.</p> <p>Over the next few years, the aim is to make IOM Government increasingly a place where people want to work and develop, with a positive culture, and a recognition of achievement, value and the importance of delivery.</p>

The 'Our Public Service' culture programme continues, organised into six core areas for improvement which have been identified by staff, including through a culture conference in November 2023. The six themes of the programme and target outcomes include;

1. Standards & Values

- Staff conduct and behaviours are aligned with the Public Service standards and values;
- Staff are empowered to challenge behaviours that do not align with Public Service standards and values;
- A reduction in the risk of disagreements and employee claims;
- Overall improvement in the performance of the delivery of Public Services.

2. Leadership, Empowerment & Governance

- Staff have greater freedom to perform their roles, increasing efficiency, creativity, and operational performance, ultimately providing better customer service;
- Higher levels of trust in leadership and a supportive culture of fairness, honesty, empowerment, and respect lead to increased staff engagement and retention;
- The decision-making load on leaders/managers is reduced, fostering a high-performance organisation through effective communication, teamwork, and collaboration;
- Innovation and idea generation are enhanced in a culture where it is safe to voice and share improvement suggestions, driving continuous organisational improvement;
- Effective and trusting relationships are built through positive and constructive interactions, creating a more engaged and empowered workforce fulfilled by helping others and delivering for stakeholders.

3. Performance Development

- Employees have a clear understanding of their job responsibilities, expectations, and priorities;
- Individuals actively seek and embrace constructive input as a catalyst for their personal and professional development;
- Individuals engage in open discussions to identify goals, align their aspirations, and create actionable plans to achieve those objectives;
- As a result of capable management, staff members experience greater confidence and trust in the quality of leadership within the organisation;
- As a result of effective Performance Development processes, employees have an increased sense of job satisfaction and loyalty to the organisation, leading to greater levels of retention.

4. Communication & Employee Voice

- Communication is embedded into the role of a senior leader, ensuring that transparency in communication and actions dispels myths and improves trust in senior leaders;

- Effective communication demonstrates that senior leaders are addressing stakeholder concerns, while visible leaders and managers listen to staff and act to address issues;
- Employees are highly engaged and retained through appreciation, a shared sense of purpose, collaboration, and wellbeing, fostering a culture where staff feel safe and listened to;
- Implementing a communication strategy aligned with the target culture, supported by a range of flexible tools, empowers all parts of the Public Service to develop and deliver an effective Employee Voice and Engagement Framework;
- Fostering an environment where all staff have the opportunity to speak up and be heard through a variety of engagement methods, we can effectively adapt to change and ensure the continued support of service delivery.

5. Value & Recognition

- Staff are more engaged with the organisation;
- Staff report feeling valued and respected for contributions;
- Staff have clarity around how their role aligns with the goals of the organisation;
- Improved organisational performance and productivity, clear accountabilities, employee retention and loyalty, overcoming barriers to communication;
- A range of initiatives provide the opportunity for all departments to recognise staff performance.

6. Working Environment & Related Policies

- A culture of trust, where leaders and teams can develop the knowledge and skills to work effectively in a hybrid environment;
- Empowered employees, with modern technology and support to work when and where they are most effective, enhanced productivity and service delivery, helping to attract and retain the right employees in a competitive market;
- Improved facilities to ensure well-maintained workspaces, with a helpdesk to manage expectations in line with SLA's, ensuring basic hygiene factors are maintained, helping employees to feel valued and motivated;
- Modern workspaces that optimise space, including unassigned bookable workstations for a proportion of the workforce, creating savings to enable reinvestment, whilst encouraging the broader employee networks and enhanced collaboration;
- Reduced carbon footprint through more environmentally sustainable practices and property portfolio changes;
- A positive influence on employee wellbeing and morale, which helps retain and attract high calibre employees.

Two priorities for 2024-25 are a renewed emphasis on all staff having the opportunity of regular conversations about their performance and development; and increasing opportunities for staff reward and

	<p>recognition across the whole public service. Alongside this, there will be more internal communications embracing all Departments, Boards and Offices, so that staff can increasingly understand what other teams do and to underpin the sense of One Public Service.</p> <p>This programme is already funded through existing budgets.</p>
Response	Accept
Lead	Chief Executive Officer (Isle of Man) Government - supported by Cabinet Office
Milestones / Dates	<p>Ongoing. Programme activities to date include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing consultation on culture within Government. • Introduction and facilitation of an annual staff conference. • Creation of an internal staff programme webpage • Production of development tool kits to assist people development including but not limited to 'Succession Planning', 'Strategy Development', 'Skills Gap Analysis', 'Communication Strategy', 'Hybrid Working', 'Vision & Values', 'organisational maturity self-assessment'. • Employee experience process for leavers of the organisation has been reviewed and tailored. • Implementation of the Performance Development framework alongside creation of an online portal and guidance.

Emergency Powers

R10	There should be an expectation of written advice from the Attorney General on central issues at all times including the use of Emergency Powers, border restrictions and quarantine.
Commentary	<p>The Attorney General's Chambers' Business Continuity Plan has been updated and the policy in relation to receipt of advice and instructions into Chambers has been updated (along with instruction forms, and the implementation of an advisory inbox).</p> <p>A trained loggist in Chambers has been identified, and Chambers has identified Crown Support who will maintain records of advice provided. It should be noted that any formal minutes of any advice given verbally should be kept and logged by the recipient.</p> <p>These actions were funded through existing financial provisions and has been completed.</p>
Response	Accept
Lead	Attorney General's Chambers

Milestones / Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers Business Continuity Plan Updated • Written Advice Policy Updated in the Attorney General's Chambers
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R11	Attorney General's Chambers should consider contingency planning to increase capacity.
Commentary	<p>The existing application for admission to a select list with contract has been reviewed, and re-drafted, following internal consultation with all legal divisions in Chambers. The draft now includes prosecutions in greater detail and drafting services.</p> <p>As this is a Treasury contract, an updated Application for admission with contract have now been submitted to Treasury, to provide further instructions. Provisions are set in legal costs reserve fund if Chambers does not have the budget for outsourced work.</p>
Response	Accept
Lead	Attorney General's Chambers
Milestones / Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contingency plans reviewed and instructions submitted to Treasury.

R12	The comprehensive review of the Island's emergency power legislation, as recommended by the Council of Ministers in 2011, should be urgently undertaken and followed through.
Commentary	<p>As outlined in the initial response to April Tynwald, the Department of Home Affairs has progressed multiple areas of work to enhance the Island's Emergency Planning provisions.</p> <p>The Council of Ministers has made the Council Of Ministers' Emergency Planning, Response And Recovery Direction 2023 which aims to address some of the deficiencies in the Emergency Powers Act 1936 in relation to planning, co-ordination and co-operation as well as the recovery from an emergency or major incident.</p> <p>The Emergency Planning Strategic Group has overseen the roll out of the joint Emergency Services Interoperability Protocol (JESIP) which aims to improve the way our emergency services collaborate in the event of an emergency or major incident.</p> <p>The above actions have addressed the immediate deficiencies, and a more general review of the emergency powers legislation will form part of the wider work to address the future of emergency planning.</p>

	An outline plan to address the future of emergency planning which will aim to address recommendation 12 is detailed in the appendix.
Response	Accept
Lead	Department of Home Affairs

R13	Publication and preservation of legislative material should be reviewed and a process developed to ensure that transparency can be maintained in a prolonged emergency involving high volumes of material.
Commentary	<p>As detailed in the April report, the Clerk of Tynwald's Office and the Attorney General's Chambers publish legislative material independently at different stages in the legislative lifecycle. Improved use of electronic document and records management systems which have built in workflows and pre-defined retention policies should be considered between the two Offices.</p> <p>If consideration determined the use of electronic document and records management system(s) was needed, funding would be required to deliver a technical solution, but these costs are not yet known and will be requested later if required.</p>
Response	Accept - in principle, however full implementation cannot be accepted until full costs are known.
Lead	Clerk of Tynwald's Office , working with Attorney General's Chambers
Key Milestones / Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk of Tynwald's Office Business Continuity Plan updated. • Paper setting out considerations written by March 2025.

Repatriation at the Comis Hotel

R14	Government should refund the charges imposed on returning residents at the Comis and acknowledge that they went through a very difficult experience, which was for the good of the Island.
Commentary	<p>The Council of Ministers accepts this recommendation and has authorised a refund scheme accordingly for returning Isle of Man residents who were required to stay at the Comis during the eligible period of 15 April – 13 May 2020.</p> <p>Treasury revenue contingency funding of approximately £100,000 will be required, if all eligible individuals claim a refund.</p>

Response	Accept
Lead	DOI and Treasury
Key Milestone/Dates	The refund application process will be live after the publication of this report.

R15	The National Preventative Mechanism (NPM) should be given attention to ensure that it is an effective mechanism, and there should be an expectation that NPM can access independent legal advice where it is considering the legality of detention.
Commentary	<p>The NPM and Cabinet Office have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Upon review it has been agreed that aspects of the MoU require strengthening to ensure the process is clear and understood with regards to the Cabinet Office having a positive obligation to notify the NPM in scenarios akin to that of quarantine at the Comis. Up to date points of contact are also being included within the MoU, as the chair of the NPM has changed since the MoU was signed.</p> <p>This MoU sets out provision for legal advice to be provided by the Attorney General’s Chambers (AGC) but, where independent advice is required, the Cabinet Office and AGC will assist in sourcing such advice externally and independently. Treasury holds a legal services agreement for external counsel which is being reviewed to ensure the appropriate changes to required legal services agreement are applied. These are already funded through existing financial provisions.</p> <p>Work on preparing a revised MoU has started and when the draft has been finalised, it will be shared with the NPM for its input.</p>
Response	Accept
Lead	Cabinet Office
Key Milestone/Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Memorandum of Understanding between Cabinet Office and NPM by September 2024. • Ensure provision for accessing independent legal advice is understood and updated by September 2024.

Social Care and Social Needs

R16	Contingency planning in DHSC and Manx Care should strive for an equal focus on social and community-based services and ensure that policy and guidance is relevant to community settings.
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Commentary	<p>Contingency plans will as far as possible, be informed by, and include, areas outlined within the recommendation. Contingency plans for public sector care homes have been updated.</p> <p>There is work ongoing to clarify the respective roles of the Director of Public Health, the Registration and Inspection unit, and the Infection, Prevention and Control service in relation to private care homes in a crisis. It should be noted that this provision is not Isle of Man specific, and the response will consider how other jurisdictions are addressing these issues and therefore requires further analysis.</p> <p>These are already funded through existing financial provisions.</p>
Response	Accept
Lead	Department of Health and Social Care (working with Manx Care and Public Health)
Key Milestones / Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public sector Care Homes - Contingency plans updated in May 2024. Private sector Care Homes – Contingency planning for private sector care homes in crisis will be updated by December 2024.

R17	The relationship between unit staff and external line management of residential units for people with learning disabilities should be improved to ensure that necessary support, resources and equipment are available for staff and residents in the event of a future pandemic
Commentary	<p>Following the establishment of the Care Home Assessment Rapid Response Team (CHARRT), they supported all residential care facilities including Learning Disability Community Homes operated by DHSC/Manx Care as well as those facilities externally commissioned. Throughout the pandemic, CHARRT provided support, advice, Personal Protective Equipment and other equipment.</p> <p>At the end of the pandemic, the contingency planning function of CHARRT was transferred to Infection Control whose responsibility it is to ensure care home contingency plans are regularly reviewed alongside an Infection Control Specialist Practitioner.</p> <p>The refocused 'CHARRT' team now undertakes individual reviews of care home and learning disability community house residents to ensure they have a Treatment Escalation Plan (TEP) undertaken, which documents their or their next of kin's wishes should they become unwell.</p> <p>These actions have been completed and were funded through existing financial provisions.</p>
Response	Accept
Lead	Manx Care

Key Milestones / Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHARRT established in May 2020. • Transition to Infection Control Team occurred in June 2022.
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Education

R18	<p>Government should identify how it will ensure the voice of children is heard when making important decisions which affect them, and train senior officers and Ministers about children’s rights including obligations under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>
Commentary	<p>One of the key principles for One Government in Our Island Plan is that of listening. The plan states the importance of listening “<i>to continue to understand the changing needs of our people.</i>”</p> <p>The report of the Independent Review has highlighted the need for Government to listen to all voices, in both the development of policy and the delivery of functions for the people of the Isle of Man.</p> <p>The Department for Education, Sport and Culture already deploys a number of methodologies to gather the voices of children, particularly in relation to the school environment. Consideration is being given to how these mechanisms can deliver a unified voice on specific matters.</p> <p>In times of emergency or crisis, especially a prolonged crisis like the recent pandemic, there is the need to ensure that “quieter” voices are heard and that the right people can represent these processes in the emergency planning process.</p> <p>Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child titled “respect for the views of the child” is clear; “<i>Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child’s day-to-day home life.</i>”²</p> <p>The UK’s ratification of this convention has been extended to the Isle of Man. Whilst the Isle of Man is not a Party to the convention in its own right, but is part of the UK State Party, the Isle of Man is fully committed to honouring the requirements of this convention. To strengthen this commitment, it is accepted that senior officers and Ministers with responsibility for policy which affects children should undertake specific training on children’s rights and obligations under Article 12 of the Convention.</p>

² <https://www.gov.im/media/1377537/uncrc-summary.pdf>

	<p>The Cabinet Office have identified potential suppliers of training, with a specific focus on children’s rights, including obligations under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and are working to pursue options for delivery.</p> <p>In addition, as advised in Our Island Plan, the Cabinet Office is developing a Child First policy, with input from across Government via the Health, Learning and Social Policy Board. The policy will amplify Government’s commitment to putting children’s needs and experiences at the centre of decision-making processes and seeks to ensure that their rights, views and interests are considered.</p>
Response	Accept in principle, however full implementation cannot be accepted until full costs are known
Lead	Cabinet Office working with DESC and DHA
Key Milestones / Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoping of options to deliver children’s rights training underway - June 2024.

R19	Government should work with school leaders to devise a written plan for school closure.
Commentary	<p>A number of policies, plans and processes currently exist, to manage the closures of schools. In the short term, these will be consolidated into an initial, single plan, to cover all eventualities. Longer term, the plan needs to be further developed to be integrated with recommendation 21, to include an outline for the provision for remote learning in the event of extended lengths of school closures.</p> <p>The safeguarding of children and young people is of priority to the Department and will be incorporated into the plan and any decisions related to this plan.</p> <p>There may be future requirements for funding the technology required for the provision of remote learning should there be a school closure. This is currently unknown until a plan is in place.</p> <p>In order to understand the level of funding required, it would require a piece of work to understand what levels of technology ownership exist within students of each school.</p> <p>To undertake this piece of work there would initially be a small project management resource requirement, to scope deliverables in each area. Some of the work required could be consumed within business as usual and some may require additional resource, specifically the digitalisation of the curriculum.</p>

Response	Accept in principle, however full implementation cannot be accepted until full costs are known.
Lead	Department of Education, Sport & Culture
Key Milestones / Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consolidate current policies, plans and processes for school closure by December 2024. • Develop plan to incorporate remote learning from September 2025. • Implement remote learning element of the plan once funding is understood and secured.

R20	Government should have a quality assurance system in place for teaching in schools which includes assessment of remote learning provision.
Commentary	<p>A new Quality Assurance model has been being implemented across all schools and educational services via a phased approach since September 2022.</p> <p>The model refers to future digital generation which includes self-assessment and validation of the school's ability to educate their students in the ability to find, evaluate, utilise, share and create content using a variety of digital resources. The curriculum for the digital generation is supported by technology to create precise and meaningful assessment and feedback, adaptive learning systems and personalised teaching that includes spaced repetition to support long term memory. This encompasses all methods of learning delivery, including the delivery of remote learning.</p> <p>The Department of Education, Sport & Culture currently have a contract in place with Tribal (Empowering Education International Ltd), from September 2023 until September 2026 to undertake external validation visits in schools and services. 14 schools and one service will have been through the external validation process by the end of this academic year as part of the pilot process, before roll out across all schools and services in September 2024.</p> <p>The Department of Education, Sport & Culture would need additional funding of approximately £250,000 annually from September 2024 to provide additional support to enable schools and services to continually develop, following their external validation visits.</p>
Response	Accept
Lead	Department of Education, Sport & Culture
Key Milestones / Dates	As part of the Quality Assurance process, all schools and educational services will be externally validated on a three-year cycle from September 2024.

R21	The recommendations of the EIS Review, aimed at ensuring access to high quality remote learning, should be implemented, under DESC oversight.
Commentary	<p>This response is incorporated into the response for recommendations 19 and 20.</p> <p>As there has been a need for training identified, DESC is considering ways to fund releasing teachers for additional training and is seeking to make a funding submission last quarter of 2024.</p>
Response	Accept
Lead	Department of Education, Sport & Culture
Key Milestones / Dates	N/A

Healthcare

R22	There should be urgent action to ensure that the oxygen supply at Noble’s Hospital is secure, and that there is a realistic contingency plan to expand oxygen capacity in an emergency.
Commentary	<p>The existing Oxygen Duplex Vacuum Insulated Evaporator (VIE) used for the cryogenic storing of medical grade oxygen is secure and sufficient for current hospital operations. A contingency plan has already been developed in the event of extra supplies being required to support patients in need of oxygen therapy over and above the existing capacity of the hospital in the event of a pandemic with a similar respiratory impact as COVID-19. This includes a MOU with BOC to more frequently top up the VIE as and when required and a backup manifold which allows for larger cylinders to be attached to the main oxygen system. In order to ensure full resilience a backup VIE would be required should the primary system fail and we have to fall back on supply through the cylinder manifold.</p> <p>An additional VIE will be subject to a successful capital business case to secure the funding</p>
Response	Acceptance in principle, however full implementation cannot be accepted until a business case is approved.
Lead	Department of Health and Social Care (working with Manx Care)
Key Milestones / Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contingency plan updated to expand oxygen capacity in an emergency Business Case submitted to Project Development Fund in June 2024.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Oxygen Duplex VIE installation timeframe to be advised, if capital funding is approved.
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R23	Data recording and retention at the hospital needs improvement such that hospital-acquired infection can be swiftly identified, reported and monitored.
Commentary	Manx Care has addressed this recommendation with the implementation of ICNET clinical surveillance software which will assist with ongoing management of a pandemic.
Response	Accept
Lead	Manx Care
Key Milestones / Dates	ICNET live and in use since January 2021.

Communication

R24	A communication and engagement strategy should be a central part of a response to an emergency, and a model strategy should be created now using the Review's recommended outline.
Commentary	<p>This expanded recommendation provides a valuable framework for an emergency communication and engagement strategy.</p> <p>The suggestions made within this expanded recommendation are being reviewed against the existing approaches to communication and will form part of the review into emergency planning (recommendations 1-5). The Government Communications Service recognises that many of the objectives and principles set out are already embedded in its established working practices, but the model strategy will assist in identifying areas where there are any gaps and where there is room for improvement.</p> <p>This should ensure the Government is able to build a communication and engagement strategy which clearly sets out best practice for any future emergency situations.</p> <p>These are already funded through existing financial provisions, with the exception of the emergency planning work by the Department of Home Affairs in the preceding section.</p>
Response	Accept
Lead	Cabinet Office (working with Department of Home Affairs)
Key Milestones / Dates	<p>Draft to be completed: 1 October 2024.</p> <p>Final version for Council of Ministers approval: 1 December 2024.</p>

R25	Accessibility to Government communications should be immediately improved
Commentary	<p>The development of a needs analysis is being progressed, to better understand what accessibility barriers exist and how best to address these in government communications. This will require consultation with representative groups on the Island prior to outlining a full response to improve existing communications.</p> <p>To be determined if additional funding is required, but it is hoped this recommendation can be achieved through a collaborate approach, working in partnership with the third sector and adopting best practice.</p>
Response	Accept
Lead	Cabinet Office
Key Milestones / Dates	<p>Complete best practice research, in partnership with third sector: Oct 2024.</p> <p>Options appraisal: 1 December 2024.</p>

Technology

R26	Implement the Digital Strategy 2023 – 2027
Commentary	<p>Many work streams within the digital strategy⁷ are already complete or underway.</p> <p>Auditing laptop provision. Our policy is now 'Laptop First' when new devices are deployed or replaced then a laptop is provided as the first choice. We continue to audit the provision with around 60% of our estate now using laptop or mobile devices, which is up from 40% in 2020.</p> <p>Remote access to all parts of the Government system. All devices now have virtual private networking installed by default (this was previously optional). This means that all Government systems are accessible remotely where officers have a laptop device. For those without a laptop device, other remote access technologies exist which enable IOMG workers to connect to Government services as required.</p> <p>Increase our computer literacy. Government Technology Services (GTS) is recruiting a new training officer to develop training programs to increase computer literacy. GTS have also developed a new learning pathway for IT beginners or new joiners to the Government.</p> <p>Maintaining internet coverage. GTS have contracted with a new supplier to provide internet coverage. This provides resilient links and increased bandwidth.</p>

	Furthermore, work is ongoing to integrate the remaining elements of the Digital Strategy into an ongoing service modernisation and digitisation programme - Modernisation of Government Services (MOGS). The future programme of service digitisation will require transformation funding and business case preparation is well progressed.
Response	Accept – in principle however full implementation will require business case approval.
Lead	Cabinet Office
Key Milestones / Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline Business Case for Modernisation of Government Services (MOGS) Programme: Q3 2024. • MOGS delivery over an approximate 2 year period to 2026.

R27	GTS should consider contingency planning to increase capacity in emergencies
Commentary	<p>As advised in April, a procurement framework agreement is already in place which gives GTS quick and flexible access to external resources where necessary. It became clear during the pandemic that access to 3rd party resources and support was limited and so the agreement only goes so far.</p> <p>GTS has reviewed the framework and consider the arrangement in place to provide adequate mitigation for the risk. It is already funded through existing financial provisions. This information will be included in business continuity plans when next updated.</p>
Response	Accept
Lead	Cabinet Office
Key Milestones / Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contingency plans to be written into business continuity plans by October 2024. This will include details of the framework and the call off mechanisms.

Vaccines

R28	Government should have a mass vaccination plan that can be implemented in the event of any future pandemic, which is reviewed regularly.
Commentary	<p>It is agreed that a comprehensive mass vaccination plan should be integrated into pandemic planning (recommendations 1-5). A scalable plan will be developed that includes pre-identified suitable sites for implementation and a staffing plan to redeploy clinical and administrative resources as needed to deliver the vaccination program.</p> <p>Changes to legislation to allow Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPA), which enables a nominated person to make health and care decisions on behalf of a person who does not have mental capacity, would make delivery of</p>

	<p>a mass vaccination programme much more effective and avoid significant workload being passed over to GPs to make such decisions. This would be made possible by implementation of the Capacity Act 2023.</p> <p>This work is already funded through existing financial provisions.</p>
Response	Accept
Lead	Manx Care & Department of Health and Social Care - working with Public Health, DHSC and Attorney General's Chambers.
Key Milestones / Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass vaccination plan to be complete by December 2024. • Capacity Act 2023 (to provide a clear legal framework to support and protect people who lack capacity to make their own decisions) has received Royal Assent and DHSC is developing an implementation plan that will be published in the Autumn of 2024.

R29	A single patient record should be implemented
Commentary	<p>An ongoing project within the Health and Care Transformation programme is evaluating various options for implementing a single Manx Care Record. The funding and decision to proceed have yet to be determined due to the project's complexity and the substantial funding likely to be required.</p> <p>Project development funding has been awarded for the development of a complex business case and associated preliminary work for the Manx Care Record.</p> <p>An independent external provider is currently engaged with work underway to deliver the business case on the options by the end of June 2024 which will consider the following domains; Strategic Case, Commercial Case, Economic Case, Management Case and Financial Case.</p>
Response	Accept in principle – although options to address problems with patient records vary and so implementation of a single patient record should be carefully considered as part of the business case review process.
Lead	Funding to be obtained by the Department of Health and Social Care and delivery to be led by Manx Care.
Key Milestones / Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outline business case with five options for consideration in June 2024. Indicative costs submitted to the Major Projects Board with the recommended option to be developed into a full business case. • Implementation is likely to be staged over 10 years between 2025 and 2035.

Testing

R30	Government should establish how testing capacity could be increased rapidly in the event of another pandemic
Commentary	<p>Manx Care’s testing capacity limit is a maximum of 700 tests per day for any pandemic virus. The lab is limited by its size and cannot accommodate any more machines or analysts to increase the testing capacity.</p> <p>Manx Care and DEFA are engaging on the ability to use the Government Analyst Laboratory as a contingency. The Government Analyst Laboratory is currently in the process of developing PCR capabilities. The technology is the same between animal and human viruses; however, there would need to be further work to ensure the necessary skills and resources are available to enable scaling up of human testing.</p> <p>Manx Care is also considering ways to increase testing capacity through a capital investment programme. The creation of a new lab would be subject to significant funding and facilities support from DOI and so would require prioritisation as part of Government’s longer-term capital programme.</p>
Response	Accept
Lead	Manx Care (working with other Departments including DEFA re Government Laboratory).
Key Milestones / Dates	Manx Care and DEFA will create a contingency plan for increasing testing capacity rapidly in the event of another pandemic, by Sept 2024

Recovery from COVID-19

R31	A Covid Recovery Strategy should be developed and funded.
Commentary	<p>Several existing strategies each partially address this recommendation, including the Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy, the ongoing Restoration and Recovery Strategy (phase 2 having recently been completed), the Youth Strategy, the Carers Strategy and broader social recovery initiatives.</p> <p>(a) Recovery initiative led by Department of Education, Sport & Culture</p> <p>As referred to in April, Headteachers know their pupils well and therefore are best placed to determine appropriate steps for any individual whose education may have been impacted by the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>Schools continually assess and track the progress pupils make, utilising available staff to put in place provision and identify support for any</p>

	<p>issues identified, be they academic or personal. Education Advice and Support partners and specialised support services within DESC continue to work with primary and secondary schools to help them develop their provision to address any gaps in learning, and to ensure appropriate support is available.</p> <p>The Department is currently looking to enhance the resources currently supporting within schools through the building of a support team with mixed specialism, which would be deployed to further support schools or individuals where there is need as evidenced by the data gathered, in the manner described above. This doesn't need to be a permanent team and data monitoring would inform when recovery levels were achieved.</p> <p>Funding would be required to build a support team with mixed specialism for schools. If given the go ahead, a bid would be expected to go in last quarter of 2024.</p> <p>(b) Recovery initiatives led by DHSC & Manx Care</p> <p>The Department of Health and Social Care, and Manx Care have recently received confirmation that the business case of £3.5 million for the Children & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) has been approved. This business case will help bridge the current demand and capacity gap within the service which has seen an 83% increase in demand since the end of the pandemic.</p> <p>Currently, the Island is treating long covid in children symptomatically. The Department is considering the level of need for a specific service that could be included in the mandate to Manx Care in future. There would be a need for additional revenue for any additional services added to the mandate and discussions are ongoing with Alder Hey Children's Hospital regarding commissioning a visiting children's long covid service for the Isle of Man, which would require further funding.</p>
Response	Accept
Lead	Chief Executive Officer – to lead strategy across government
Key Milestones / Dates	<p>(a) Recovery initiative led by Department of Education, Sport & Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools identify needs of children and provision focussed support from within current resource. • Data gathered September – December 2024 to inform current student needs. • Analyse data January 2025. • Determine what support is required based on the data analysed and deploy further support to bolster the support schools are already providing. <p>(b) Recovery initiatives led by DHSC & Manx Care</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CAMHS Business Case approved May 2024.• CAMHS - Tender for commissioned service for early intervention, support in schools and a single point of access in June 2024.• CAMHS - 6 new CMHPs advertised in June 2024.• Feedback from Alder Hey on viability of visiting Children's Long Covid service in May 2024.• Data gathering for Children's Long Covid service underway.• Determine service specification and mandate requirements for 25/26.
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Appendix

Proposed Approach to the Future of Emergency Planning in the Isle of Man

Context

In recent years, considerable work has been undertaken to enhance emergency planning both directly through the emergency planning function of the Department of Home Affairs and through cross-Government working. An overview of this work is outlined in the Council of Ministers Early Assessment of Recommendations of the Isle of Man Independent Covid Review Report³.

This work included the fundamental starting point of the updated [Council of Ministers Emergency Planning, Response and Recovery Direction 2023⁴](#), which sets out the requirement for Departments, Boards and Offices to prepare and test emergency plans and to co-operate in the event of an emergency, including during the subsequent recovery phase.

The work also included a small increase in capacity and resilience within the Emergency Planning Unit, commencing updating the National Risk Register and critical plans, rolling out further training across public bodies and hosting an increased number of live and table-top exercises.

These actions that have been underway seek to directly address a number of recommendations within the Isle of Man Independent Covid Review Report, particularly recommendations 1-5 which seek to “address emergency planning and the improvement of preparedness, resilience and command structures” plus recommendations 6, 12 and 24 which are all relevant.

Proposed Approach

While significant progress can be demonstrated through these actions, there is merit in a holistic approach at this point to take full stock of the existing provision, recent improvements, the detailed recommendations in the Report and learning from elsewhere, to complete the transformation of the emergency planning function. As such, the following programme of work (which links to the Isle of Man Independent Covid Review Report) is considered as the most appropriate approach to take:

³ <https://www.tynwald.org.im/spfile?file=/business/opgp/sittings/20212026/2024-GD-0029.pdf>

⁴ <https://tynwald.org.im/index.php/spfile?file=/links/tls/SD/2023/2023-SD-0325.pdf>

	Deliverable	Details of deliverable	Linked Recommendation
1	Emergency Planning Framework	Deliver an overarching framework that brings together all aspects of emergency planning and addresses the issues identified in the Independent Covid Review Report. The framework will sit beneath the Council of Ministers Emergency Planning, Response and Recovery Direction 2023 and will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and assurance • Preparing • Responding • Recovery • Community vulnerabilities 	1 4 5 6 12 24
2	National Risk Register ⁵	Accelerate the work already underway to review and update the National Risk Register	2 3
3	Plans	Update/refinement/creation (as required based on the National Risk Register) of key plans to address the contents of the National Risk Register that clearly link to/from the Emergency Planning Framework and to each other, examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infectious Disease Pandemic Plan • Cyber Incident Response Plan • Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear plans 	2 24
4	Emergency Planning Learning and Development Strategy	Development of a strategy to promote and support emergency planning training and exercising and including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and training • Exercising • Business Continuity Plans 	1 2 5 6

Once these four pillars for Emergency Planning are developed with other agencies, the Emergency Planning Unit would seek to fulfil their role (as outlined in the framework), including keeping all four pillars and the detailed supporting documents under review. The proposed approach will take account of the points raised in the Tynwald debate in April 2024 to address:

- the diverse nature of the threats facing the Island,

⁵ Where specific areas or risk relate to Departmental competence, e.g. biosecurity, that will be assigned and the Department will be allocated the response if the risk materialises.

- the need to conduct horizon scanning,
- the involvement of relevant specialists (such as the use of a Scientific Advisory Group),
- a cross-Government approach (both for input and response),
- a review of the Emergency Planning legislation,
- the approach to reporting to both Council of Ministers and Tynwald.

Timeframes and Resource Requirements

The work to date has been undertaken within existing resource, indeed the additional capacity through an Assistant Emergency Planning Officer was short lived and the post is currently vacant. The day-to-day requirements to respond to emergencies, plan training, run exercises, support other agencies, update plans and manage the Civil Defence function significantly outweigh existing resources. As such, the above programme of work will ultimately require additional resources to deliver if it is to succeed and not affect front line services.

It is expected that additional qualified and experienced resources will be required for a fixed term to work under the Emergency Planning Officer and with colleagues across all public bodies to deliver the four pillars outlined above. Based on this approach, it is estimated that timeframes following securing of resources (see below) will be:

0-3 months	Research and engagement with stakeholders
3-9 months	Creation of an Emergency Planning Framework Review and refresh of existing governance structures
9-24 months	Complete refresh of National Risk Register Complete new/updated plans Delivery of Emergency Planning Learning and Development Strategy Emergency planning exercises and training Support and review Business Continuity Plans

Based on information from comparable jurisdictions for similar work, it is estimated that the following funding would be required for the two year period, including to provide for:

- Subject Matter Expert/Delivery Resource: Estimate 0.8 whole time equivalent – Estimated Cost of £114,000
- Project Management Resource: Estimate 0.3 whole time equivalent – Estimated Cost of £57,420
- Business Analyst Resource: Estimate 0.3 whole time equivalent – Estimated Cost of £56,700
- Resources to plan, co-ordinate and run scenario-based desktop and live emergency exercises - Estimated cost of £30,000

The Department of Home Affairs has considered options to fund this work. While work has taken place to ensure only statutory services are provided and a cost improvement

programme is in place, the Department already has a fully allocated budget and significant financial pressures in the short and long term.

The Department cannot currently identify funding for this work from its existing revenue budget without affecting front line services, already established improvement programmes or existing statutory duties. The Department intends to seek funding from the Transformation Fund for temporary resource to complete this work to meet the expectations of the outlined responses to the Covid Review Report.

In addition, to continue to provide the current service, complete day to day responsibilities with sufficient capacity, capability and resilience, and maintain the programme once completed, the Emergency Planning Unit also requires an additional post, bringing the unit up to three whole time equivalent. As recognised in the Independent Covid Review Report, the Emergency Planning budget (and Department of Home Affairs' budget as a whole) was significantly reduced in 2011, which lowered the number of Emergency Planning posts to one. While the Department prioritised some of its revenue budget in 2023/24 to recruit on Assistant Emergency Planning Officer, as per the above, the Department cannot currently identify funding for this third position from its existing revenue budget without the same impact as outlined above. Additional revenue funding to more adequately and sustainably meet the Department's statutory function and maintain the transformational programme of work outlined above will be required. Therefore, the Department intends to seek a revenue budget increase of £55,000 per annum for this post.

Finally, while additional exercises (live and desktop) will be required during the two-year transformation period to test and train multi-agency personnel on new/updated plans, there is currently no revenue budget assigned for such additional exercises. At present, the exercises coordinated by Emergency Planning are run at minimal cost and any expenditure is taken from the Civil Defence training budget. This is not sustainable due to the small budget currently held for this purpose and, as outlined above, the Department cannot currently identify funding from elsewhere in its existing revenue funding without the same impact as outlined above. Therefore, to ensure ongoing training, testing and updating of plans in the long term, the Department intends to seek a revenue budget increase of £10,000 per year for exercises.

Estimated Funding Requirements

Cost	Cost per year for first 2 years	Ongoing cost
Subject matter expert/delivery resource	£57,000	
Project Management Resource	£28,710	
Business Analyst Resource	£28,350	
Exercise costs	£15,000	
TOTAL – ONE-OFF	£129,060	£0

Assistant Emergency Planning Officer	£55,000	£55,000
Exercise costs	£10,000	£10,000
TOTAL – REVENUE	£65,000	£65,000