

**JBC Extraordinary Technical Board  
Summary of Meeting  
Friday 12 March 2021  
12.00 – 1.00pm**

**Agenda**

- Methodology to assess the risk to the UK from imported Variants of Concern (VoC)

**Background**

- In light of the evolution and introduction of Variants of Concern (VoC), the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC), in collaboration with Public Health England (PHE), had revised the methodology for international risk assessments to support Ministerial decisions on border measures.
- This Technical Board meeting was to provide steers on the technical aspects of the methodology.

**Summary of discussion**

- As more unrateable countries become rateable, Day 2 and Day 8 testing of international arrivals will strengthen the methodology over time.
- Recognizing that there will be differences between nations and that various metrics are factored into different stages of the process, a broad range of indicators was crucial in calculating the risk.
- Globally, genetic surveillance capability is on a sliding scale. Only a few countries and territories have the necessary capabilities to give an accurate picture.
- The planned fortnightly assessment was appropriate, and the disclosure of data and results is a crucial aspect in the credibility of genome sequencing capabilities.

**Conclusion**

- The Board was satisfied that the proposed methodology met the specified technical requirements for informing Ministerial decisions for border measures, noting the low-probability events of VoCs being introduced into the UK could not be totally mitigated against.

**Decisions**

- The Board approved the methodology and agreed that the proposed metrics were practical and technically sound.

## Attendees

- Dr Gregor Smith – Chief Medical Officer for Scotland **(Chair)**
- Dr Frank Atherton – Chief Medical Officer for Wales
- Dr Michael McBride – Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland
- Professor Chris Whitty – Chief Medical Officer for England
- Dr Huw Brunt – Chief Environmental Public Health Officer, Wales
- Dr Rob Orford – Chief Scientific Advisor for Health, Welsh Government
- Dr Clare Gardiner – JBC, Director General
- Head of Legal, Policy and Compliance, JBC
- Dr Chris Savoury – JBC, Head of International
- Dr Paul Cleary – JBC, Director, Analysis & Assessment
- Emily-Jane Cramphorn – JBC, International Analyst
- Dr Katherine Russell – Public Health England, Head of International Cell
- Rachel Glass – Public Health England, International Cell
- 4 government officials and observers from the JBC and Devolved Administrations