

**JBC Extraordinary Technical Board
Summary of Meeting
Monday 26 April 2021
1.00 – 2.00pm**

Agenda

- International Risk Assessment methodology

Background

- This Technical Board meeting was to focus on the international risk assessment methodology, which will be used to inform Ministerial decisions on border measures and the RAG lists.
- The Board would concentrate solely on the technical aspects of JBC analysis.
- Any policy decisions arising from this meeting would be for Ministers.

Summary of discussion

- Given the frequently restricted nature of the data available, developing a risk assessment to meet these standards is extremely difficult, and JBC had provided a greatly enhanced methodology that addressed the Board's previous concerns.
- Due to limitations in worldwide surveillance, including genetic sequencing, there will always be a (possibly considerable) residual risk.
- It was acknowledged that this makes having sufficient confidence that the risk of VoCs being imported into the UK can be entirely minimised extremely difficult.
- In addition to VoCs, high-risk Variants under Investigation (Vul) should be examined; JBC should investigate an absolute maximum SARS-CoV-2 risk threshold that could inform Red list judgments alongside VoC risk.
- Levels set by the World Health Organization (WHO) could be considered and the rate of change of epidemiological indicators.
- Given the scarcity of sub-regional data, any sub-regional analysis or assessment by island/groups of islands would be extremely difficult.
- Ministers from the four nations may choose to use the approaches in slightly different ways in terms of policy outcomes.

Conclusion

- The Board agreed that using red or amber as the default starting point for assessing country risk was a Ministerial policy decision.
- Ministers should be informed that using amber as the default posed a higher residual risk, but this was up to their discretion.

Decisions

- The Board approved the methodology, subject to the objections raised above.

Attendees

- Professor Chris Whitty – Chief Medical Officer for England (**Chair**)
- Dr Gregor Smith – Chief Medical Officer for Scotland
- Dr Frank Atherton – Chief Medical Officer for Wales
- Dr Michael McBride – Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland
- Dr Ian Young – Chief Scientific Advisor for Health, Northern Ireland
- Fliss Bennee – Deputy Director & Co-Chair of TAG, Welsh Government
- Dr Huw Brunt – Chief Environmental Public Health Officer, Wales
- Dr Clare Gardiner – JBC, Director General
- Head of Legal, Policy and Compliance, JBC
- Dr Chris Savoury – JBC, Head of International
- Dr Anna Seale – JBC, Deputy Director, Health Science
- Dr Jane Williams – JBC, Deputy Director, Analysis and Assessment
- Amy Thomas – JBC, International
- Dr Katherine Russell – Public Health England, Head of International Cell
- Dr Alicia Demirjian – Public Health England
- Dr Hilary Kirkbride – Public Health England
- Rachel Glass – Public Health England, International Cell
- 5 government officials and observers from the JBC and Devolved Administrations