

9th March 2021

Dear Colleagues,

In light of the recent publication of the COVID-19 [Strategic Framework Update](#), you asked for clarification on the status of my recommendation of 18 January that all face to face unpaid work be suspended in those areas subject to enhanced level 4 stay at home restrictions.

It remains my position, and that of other clinicians, that we are cautious in terms of what activities can take place over the coming weeks, mainly to support the phased return of schools and the testing of the impact of each change.

As a result, **it is recommended that for all areas where face to face unpaid work is currently suspended, that suspension should remain in place until the return to the geographically variable levels approach** (which may occur as soon as 26 April, provided the WHO criteria for relaxation are met – see pg 14 on the PDF version of the strategic framework).

I appreciate that some areas are keen to resume face to face unpaid work as soon as possible, particularly given the rising backlog in cases, but hopefully this provides some clarity on the likely timescales involved and will assist in planning for a resumption in due course. There will clearly be an ongoing need to monitor the potential impact of the suspension on justice social work and the individuals affected, and Justice colleagues will continue to discuss this further with you during your regular meetings.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely



DR GREGOR SMITH
Chief Medical Officer