

COVID-19 Northern Ireland Updates 1st April:

Health

- The Health Minister has today issued a sober statistic stating that the possible worst case scenario in Northern Ireland could see '3000' deaths in 20 weeks
- There is now 689 confirmed cases in Northern Ireland with 30 deaths associated with the virus
- Northern Ireland is currently carrying out more testing per head of population than Scotland and Wales
- Belfast City Hospital has prepared a number of floors to potentially take on Covid-19 patients
- The Department of Health has warned that NI must be prepared for second wave of vaccine
- The Eikon Centre at the Balmoral site is being considered as an emergency hospital, similar to that in the Excel centre in London

Construction

- Finance Minister Conor Murphy has today called on those construction companies supporting essential services to comply with the Public Health Agency guidelines
- The Minister stated "*It is essential the construction sector continues to support vital public services during this challenging period including essential works on our transport, water and sewage infrastructure and essential safety work and that this is done in a safe and sustainable way to protect workers.*"
- He has asked for public authorities to continue payments to contractual suppliers at risk, even where goods and services are reduced or paused, so that they can be ready to resume normal service delivery and obligations once the outbreak has ended

Agriculture

- Minister for DAERA Edwin Poots has today pledged to continue support for food producers throughout the crisis

Business

- Economy Minister Dianne Dodds is aiming to extend the business support scheme to small manufacturers who do not fall into the category
- Caterpillar NI is suspending production at its West Belfast Assembly line until April 24th

Infrastructure

- Belfast City Council has announced that they are to resume normal bin collections after introducing social distancing measures
- Translink has announced that passenger numbers are down 85-90% which is adding to the firm's financial woes, Director Chris Conway has said it is important that



company continues to operate to transport essential workers and that firm will need another £100m to stay afloat after the crisis

- MOT Centres and Belfast's SSE Arena are currently being re-purposed to act as drive through Covid-19 test centres
- The Minister for Economy has paid tribute to the energy sector and employees who are providing vital services

Education

- Only 697 pupils were admitted to schools this week across Northern Ireland, according to figures published by the Department of Education

