

COVID-19 Northern Ireland Updates 6th April:

Health

- Northern Ireland now has 1158 confirmed cases of Covid-19 and 70 people have died as a result of the virus
- One third of the current ventilators are occupied in Northern Ireland with more than 40 people in intensive care
- Northern Ireland is carrying out the most testing per head of population ahead of the rest of the UK regions, with 395 tests per 100,000 people
- Five million items of Personal Protective Equipment have arrived for NHS staff today, the order includes 307,800 FFP3 respirator masks
- The Ramada by Wyndham Hotel in Belfast City Centre is to be used as a recovery facility for patients with Covid-19

Business

- The first indication of how the Covid-19 crisis has impacted consumer spending has emerged today, as new car sales fell by 56% in the month of March in Northern Ireland, compared to the same month last year
- Debenhams is set to go into administration, which could result in significant job losses, The firm employs 700 staff across its stores here

Agriculture

- Veterinary practitioners are following government guidelines and will only be attending farms to deal with emergency and welfare cases
- All Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs inspections have now been paused, only essential inspections for animal health and welfare, plant health, public health and environmental safety will continue

Communities

- A weekly food parcel scheme which makes deliveries to the most vulnerable in society may be expanded if needed, 10,000 food boxes are set to be delivered this week
- The Twelfth of July parade for 2020 has been cancelled by the Orange Order and Arlene Foster has stated the Eleventh Night bonfires should not go ahead either

Housing

- The Department of Communities is to issue guidance to landlords this week around private rentals during the crisis. Minister Deirdre Hargey has drawn up legislation to ensure that tenants can't be evicted, for not paying rent if they cannot afford it, during this period
- Housing Executive rents which were due to increase this month by 2.75% to meet shortfalls, have now been put on hold until October

