

COVID-19 Northern Ireland Updates 3rd April:

Health

- There is now a total of 904 confirmed Covid-19 cases in Northern Ireland and 48 people have now died as a result of the virus
- The Public Health Agency have today issued a warning over drinking habits during this period of lockdown
- In contradiction to Finance Minister Conor Murphy's statement earlier in the week, the Irish Government have today confirmed that no joint order for personal protective equipment was made between ROI and NI
- Randox have confirmed after engagement with the relevant authorities, that it's testing kits will now be directly available in NI
- The Health Minister has confirmed that these kits will be used at the SSE testing facility this weekend, where frontline NHS staff are to be tested as part of a UK-wide initiative
- The director of the Royal College of Nursing has again raised concerns about the levels of personal protective equipment available to nurses

Business

- The Emergency Business Loan scheme has been revamped by the UK Government as many firms expressed difficulties in obtaining loans
- Sunday Trading restrictions in Northern Ireland have been lifted to help NHS staff and the vulnerable, shops may now open at 10:00am as opposed to the normal time of 13:00pm

Agri-food

- The Ulster Farmers Union has accused a major meat processor and two retailers of underhand tactics and threatening the unity and sustainability of the food supply chain, over reports that ABP in Great Britain has supplied 400 tonnes of Polish beef to Sainsbury and Asda

Education

- 226 Schools are prepared to open over Easter and 126 schools have indicated they are prepared to open at weekends to take on vulnerable children and the staff of key workers
- The BBC will offer daily online programmes in an effort to help parents and children with home schooling
- Education Minister Peter Weir will make the decision on the awarding of GCSE and A-Level results, according to CCEA
- Students in NI who study A-Levels operated by English Exam boards will be graded based on predictions from teachers

Infrastructure

- The AA believe that the Coronavirus will transform UK work and travel as it predicts a permanent increase in working from home



