

The Rt Hon Theresa May
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

April 2017

PANDEMIC-FLU CROSS-GOVERNMENT READINESS WORK PROGRAMME

You will recall the meeting of the NSC (THRC) subcommittee of 21 February, which directed the Cabinet Office and Department of Health to oversee a cross-Government work programme to increase the UK's readiness to manage the effects of a severe influenza pandemic. This letter sets out the work that has since been undertaken and the proposed next steps which will require action by the majority of departments.

On 29 March the Cabinet Office and Department of Health chaired a meeting of relevant departments to agree a cross-Government work programme with the following primary objectives:

- Further improve the plans of the health care sector to flex systems and resources during a severe pandemic;
- Ensure plans are in place for adult social care in England during a severe pandemic;
- Develop capability to manage the volume of additional deaths during a pandemic in an acceptable manner; and
- Increase the resilience of critical sectors to anticipated levels of employee absence during a pandemic.

In addition, a series of cross-cutting pieces of work are being developed to further improve preparedness and capability. These include:

- Developing a legislative vehicle for pandemic response measures;
- Developing a more sophisticated understanding of public expectations and reactions to a pandemic; and
- Ensuring effective communications arrangements are in place across all relevant organisations for all elements of preparedness for pandemic influenza.

OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE

Officials from our respective departments are now beginning to work with teams across the UK Government and in the Devolved Administrations to deliver these objectives, including those relating to the resilience of key sectors.

It is our intention that the work programme should be completed by the early spring of 2018. To this end, we are copying this letter to members of the NSC (THRC) subcommittee to ensure that all departments are fully aware of the Government's objectives with respect to this risk, and the need for them to contribute to this work where they have responsibilities.

The Rt Hon Ben Gummer MP
**Minister for the Cabinet Office and
Paymaster General**

The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Health