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**From:** Rooney, Bernie [/O=NIGOV/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=C7CF96A1C4A84DCC99B0D59D6BCDBFCB-BERNIE ROONEY 0749]  
**Sent:** 19/03/2020 9:21:20 PM  
**To:** TEO C3 [c3@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk]  
**Subject:** FW: Covid-19 preparedness

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**From:** Pearson, Karen [mailto:Karen.Pearson@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 04 March 2020 2:38 PM  
**To:** Stewart, Chris (TEO) <chris.stewart@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>; Rooney, Bernie <Bernie.Rooney@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>; 'Stewart, Chris (TEO)' <chris.stewart@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>; Sterling, David <David.Sterling@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>; McCormick, Andrew (TEO) <Andrew.McCormick@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Covid-19 preparedness

Very keen to discuss how our preparedness work and C3 might intersect this year, and what we can offer from our preparedness work to assist in your risk analysis.

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**From:** Stewart, Chris (TEO)  
**Sent:** 04 March 2020 12:57  
**To:** Rooney, Bernie <Bernie.Rooney@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>; 'Stewart, Chris (TEO)' <chris.stewart@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>; Sterling, David <David.Sterling@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>; McCormick, Andrew (TEO) <Andrew.McCormick@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>; Pearson, Karen <Karen.Pearson@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Covid-19 preparedness

Bernie

Thank you –we had a useful chat about this note earlier today.

The reaction from Departmental colleagues is a little disappointing,, but perhaps not a surprise against the background of pressure.

On the specific points, I assume that no-one from DoF was present, or they would have advised that guidance on managing staff absences is under preparation. That action was agreed at NICS Board last week, so some internal communication within Departments has clearly yet to take place.

I think we all feel the weight of Cabinet Office requests. However, the answer is not to attempt to duplicate Cabinet Office structures here; eg. advice on economic impacts should be commissioned from DfE – I don't propose to establish an economic team here. The legislation is public health legislation, on which DoH must lead. I was surprised to hear that Local Government feels unsighted – you might want to point [REDACTED] in the direction of her head of profession, Nigel McMahon, who is leading its development. Again, was no one present from DoH to make that connection?

Departments are free to establish DoCs if they wish. To be candid, with the exception of DoH, I wonder what they would be doing at present, when the focus is on planning.

On standing up the HuB, I wonder whether colleagues elsewhere in Departments would thank the C3 leads if I were to accede to the request, and deprive them of 50 staff. As we discussed, in this key planning phase, my priority is the cumulative impact analysis, not standing up the hub. That is a major challenge, and our capacity is limited. For Brexit, much of the similar work was carried out by [NR] team and the NIO. Karen, [NR] and I will have a discussion to see whether any help can be provided from the (very busy) Brexit team and, subject to Ministerial views, I am not above asking NIO for a bit of help.

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**From:** Rooney, Bernie [<mailto:Bernie.Rooney@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk>]  
**Sent:** 04 March 2020 11:12  
**To:** 'Stewart, Chris (TEO)' <[chris.stewart@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:chris.stewart@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:** [NR] <[\[NR\]@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:[NR]@executiveoffice-ni.gsi.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** Covid-19 preparedness

Chris

[NR] chaired a C3 Lead meeting this morning and there were strong views that attendees asked to be fed back to you and HoCS.

The key points are as follows:

- Lack of guidance from NICSHR regarding managing staff absences;
- Lack of structures and staff to respond to Cabinet Office requests -particularly the legislative requests for input to emergency Bill
- call for DOCs to be established with immediate effect as staff in departments are under pressure to support return of Executive
- call for NI Hub to be established as a matter of priority.

Perhaps we can have a chat.

Bernie

Bernie

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