

**FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH**



First Minister and deputy First Minister

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**Irrelevant & Sensitive**  
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Dear Arlene and Michelle

We are due to discuss our ongoing response to the Coronavirus epidemic at the Executive meeting on Monday.

In that context, I wanted to record that, despite the pace at which this issue has evolved, I feel our overall response thus far has been effective – and I want to recognise the way colleagues across all departments have worked together on that.

That said, I do feel that we – as a system – have largely been in reactive mode. That is not meant as a criticism, but rather a recognition of the inherent speed and uncertainty with which events have been unfolding.

For our part, in the Department of Health we have been implementing our Emergency Plan by developing a rapid tactical and strategic response to the pandemic in NI, guided by the UK national measures to protect public health, alongside mobilising the maximum HSC resources available to address Covid-19 and maintain the delivery of essential health and social care services. That work is well advanced, and I would be happy to take some time on Monday to explain where we are with it.

However, all Executive colleagues will recognise that, while the Department of Health is at the forefront of many of the issues, this an issue that impacts all sectors and all levels of society. I therefore feel we must ensure our own strategic planning is fully and properly connected to the higher level Executive Office strategy for managing the broader societal response to, and impacts of, this issue. I am sure this is also true for my Ministerial colleagues in other departments.

In that context, I feel it would be useful if, on Monday, we could hear from colleagues in the Executive Office about their own strategic planning work, and get a sense of that overarching regional strategy.

I look forward to the discussion – I am copying this letter to all Ministerial colleagues.

Yours sincerely

Personal Data

**Robin Swann MLA**  
**Minister of Health**