

From the Minister of Finance

Robin Swann, MLA
Minister of Health

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Dear Robin

EXECUTIVE PAPER – COVID-19 FURTHER UPDATE RE. TRAVEL ADVICE

I have received your Paper circulated to Executive Ministers this evening relating to COVID-19 travel.

The paper acknowledges that the variant form of the virus is widespread in parts of England, especially the South East, and may also be prevalent in numbers in Scotland, and that it is believed to be present in the North of Ireland also, albeit not confirmed.

Your paper articulates the view that we should immediately issue guidance advising against all but essential travel between the North of Ireland and Britain, and the South of Ireland with immediate effect - and that this should include asking all new arrivals to self-isolate for 10 days following entry.

You argue the case for urgently progressing a number of things, including undertaking preparatory work on the form of any necessary changes to the legislation to instigate such a ban, and associated consideration of proportionality and human rights implications - so that we can move swiftly if we determine that such a move is necessary.

In response I want to state my dismay and astonishment that as Minister for Health you are not moving now to complete the legislative preparatory work in order to move immediately and without further delay, and impose a travel ban from Britain into the North of Ireland, particularly since the primary legislation exists which gives you the legal powers to do so.

I do not need to remind you that this is the biggest public health crisis we have faced in a generation, and that this pandemic continues to escalate daily, with this new variant causing serious alarm which requires urgent action.

I am therefore calling on you to reconsider your approach set out in the Paper and asking that you move urgently to complete the legislative preparatory work in order to introduce a travel ban between Britain and the North of Ireland.

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**CONOR MURPHY MLA
MINISTER OF FINANCE**