

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



FROM: ROBIN SWANN
Minister of Health

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TO: CDL

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL – ROI DATA SHARING

At the Covid O & 4 Nations Health Ministers meeting on 4 February I again raised my concerns relating to international travel and the threat of new variants of Covid-19 to the UK.

Although there are currently no international flights into Northern Ireland, such flights do arrive in the Republic of Ireland, with, for example, flights arriving in Dublin from Qatar, Doha and Abu Dhabi over the next few days. A number of passengers on those flights may be transiting to Northern Ireland (or indeed elsewhere in the UK) and, currently, we have no reliable manner in which to understand who such passengers are. Without that understanding, there is little possibility of contacting individuals to remind them of the legal requirement to complete a UK Passenger Locator Form and to advise them of the NI health regulations in place.

To improve this situation, my officials are working with colleagues in the Department of Health in Dublin on an agreement for the sharing of data collected by them on their Passenger Locator Forms. I must stress however, this is not a solution to the issue, rather it is a mitigation measure, and to address the threat of new variants requires an inter-Governmental approach, not solely through my Department. I would ask that you raise this matter with the Irish government to ensure they are taking all necessary action to ensure those arriving into ROI from red-listed countries, regardless of final destination, are self-isolation for at least 10 days from arrival.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Health Matt Hancock MP, First Minister Arlene Foster, deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill, and NI Secretary of State, Brandon Lewis MP.

Personal Data

Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health

Working for a Healthier People

