

**FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH**



Stephen Donnelly  
Minister for Health

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Email: [private.office@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@health-ni.gov.uk)

Your Ref:

Our Ref: INV-1971-2020

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear *Stephen,*

You may recall I wrote to you in October about the challenges in respect of international arrivals into Dublin who are travelling immediately on to Northern Ireland. As I set out in that letter, the current position is that such individuals are not required to complete the Irish passenger locator form, and whilst they are legally required to complete our online form, there is no effective way to enforce or monitor this at present.

Despite efforts to resolve this issue through CMO meetings and official channels, we have not made much progress. I welcomed the revision of the Irish Passenger Locator form to include the facility to gather data on passengers travelling to NI which would have addressed the existing issues sufficiently. However my officials have now advised that this revision has unintentionally aggravated the situation as it is no longer possible to distinguish NI bound passengers from those transiting through Dublin airport. This would mean that were we to face a similar situation to Denmark, it would not be possible to identify how many passengers had travelled to NI via Dublin from Denmark or to distinguish them from other transiting passengers.

I am aware of ongoing liaison between officials from my department and yours and we have been advised that the situation would be rectified. However as we have not been given an indication of timescale I would ask that you give this matter your urgent attention as the risk is rapidly increasing of the inability to monitor persons arriving into NI from abroad. It is so clearly in our mutual interest to be able to rapidly identify and trace people anywhere on this island to curtail further spread on the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

I am copying this letter to the UK SoS for Transport, Grant Shapps.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

PD

**Robin Swann MLA**  
Minister of Health