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CORONAVIRUS SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

Thank you for your letter of 11 September, in response to our letter on Coronavirus Subordinate Legislation and Assembly scrutiny.

During the initial stages of the pandemic, we welcomed the opportunity to provide you with support in terms of Assembly scrutiny for the regulations. As well as helping to share the workload emerging from COVID-19, this helped to demonstrate collective leadership by the Executive as a whole.

Unfortunately, it is not possible for Junior Ministers to continue taking forward the debates on the COVID-19 regulations, as they have done to date. The support they provided to DoH on this matter was made possible through work on Programme for Government (PfG) and NDNA being set aside in order that TEO staff could support Ministers. The Executive agreed in July that work would be progressed to develop a strategic PfG for implementation in April 2021. This is a significant programme of work to deliver in a challenging timescale and as such, it is necessary for both Junior Ministers and TEO officials to return to their substantive work in this regard.

This work should now return to the Department of Health. In the first instance, it is critical that DoH tables the motions for the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restriction) (No 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 by noon on Tuesday 15 September. This will enable the debate to take place on Tuesday 22 September. If the debate does not take place, both of these regulations will fall.

As our previous letter noted, we will continue to support you in the Executive and the Assembly, and our officials will continue to work closely with you as we move forward.

Yours sincerely

Personal Data

**THE RT. HON. ARLENE FOSTER MLA
FIRST MINISTER**

Personal Data

**MICHELLE O'NEILL MLA
DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER**