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Clare Haughey MSP
Convener
Health, Social Care, and Sport Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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25 March 2026

Dear Clare,

I am writing to update the Committee on the upcoming publication of the Four Nations Pandemic Preparedness Strategy ('the Strategy') on 25 March. The Strategy will be published today on the GOV.UK website and a link to the Strategy will be provided once this is available.

The COVID-19 pandemic was one of the most significant crises of our generation, and its impacts continue to be felt across our communities and public services. As highlighted in the Strategy, COVID-19 demonstrated both the scale of disruption that a novel pathogen can cause and the importance of ensuring governments hold robust, flexible capabilities to respond to future threats in an equitable way.

The Strategy sets out a series of principles for preparedness which have been agreed across the Four Nations. These principles are informed by the experience of Covid-19, the findings of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry, and initial findings from Exercise Pegasus. These insights have helped shape a set of Four Nations principles covering whole-system coordination, data and surveillance, protection of those most at risk, and the importance of preparedness across all five key routes of disease transmission.

The Scottish Government's contribution to the Strategy fits within a wider programme of work on pandemics, overseen by our Ministerial Oversight Group on Future Pandemic Preparedness which Angela Constance and I co-Chair. Protecting those most at risk remains a central priority across all aspects of that work. The Strategy recognises that pandemics can deepen existing inequalities, and that preparedness must therefore be designed with equity at its core – from early identification of groups at highest clinical risk, to mitigating unequal impacts of any future response measures.

In Scotland, work to produce a published implementation plan will draw on the findings of the UK and Scottish Covid-19 inquiries and the recommendations from Exercise Pegasus, as well as continued engagement with stakeholder groups as part of this.

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The Scottish Government would usually seek to to inform Parliament of the publication of such a strategy in the Chamber. The Strategy has been a product of close working between officials in each of the Four Nations and timings have meant that on this occasion this has not been possible. I am, however, aware the Committee will not be meeting again during this Parliamentary term and have therefore have copied this letter to Presiding Officer and the business managers of each of the parties represented in our current Parliament for their wider awareness of this publication.

Yours sincerely,



NEIL GRAY

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