

# WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

*The content of this ministerial statement is as received at the time from the Minister. It has not been subject to the Official Report (Hansard) process.*

## Agriculture and Rural Development

### RIVERS AGENCY: DE-AGENTISATION

*Published at 12.00 noon on Friday 21 March 2014*

**Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development):** Rivers Agency was established as a "Next Steps" Executive Agency in October 1996. Since then, much has changed and there is the opportunity to make its administration more efficient and scrutiny more consistent, without impinging on the operational autonomy of the staff carrying out its functions. Therefore, I have decided that Rivers Agency will cease to be an Executive Agency and will be subsumed within my Department, with effect from 1 April 2014.

Rivers Agency will continue to deliver the same core functions as before. This change is largely administrative and, initially, the only outward sign of de-agentisation will be that Rivers Agency will no longer be required to produce separate annual accounts. Accounting Officer responsibility will pass back to DARD's Permanent Secretary and the final set of Rivers Agency Accounts will be laid before the Assembly this Summer. Rivers Agency will retain its name for the immediate future.

Please note that the above statement is embargoed until 12:00 on Friday 21 March 2014.