

## An Ceann Comhairle

Seomra 39  
Foirgnimh na Parlaiminte  
Baile Lios na Scáth  
Cnoc an Anfa  
Béal Feirste, BT4 3XX

**Guthán:** +44 (0) 28 9052 1130  
**r-phost:** speakersoffice@niassembly.gov.uk



## The Speaker

Room 39  
Parliament Buildings  
Ballymiscaw  
Stormont  
Belfast, BT4 3XX

**Tel:** +44 (0) 28 9052 1130  
**email:** speakersoffice@niassembly.gov.uk

**To: All Assembly Members**

**3 February 2022**

Dear Member,

I want to inform you that I have this afternoon received a letter from Paul Givan MLA tendering his resignation as First Minister with effect from 12:01am on Friday 4 February.

In accordance with section 16B(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the offices of the First Minister and the deputy First Minister are now vacant and must be filled within a period of seven days. Therefore, the offices will have to be filled before 12.01am on Friday 11 February.

Next week I will be asking the Business Committee to make arrangements to schedule an Assembly sitting on or before Thursday 10 February 2022 to provide the opportunity for both offices to be filled before the deadline passes.

I appreciate that there is much commentary about the current circumstances in relation to legislation currently being considered at Westminster. However, I cannot deal with speculation. From my perspective, I must deal with the legal position which exists now. I will take account of subsequent changes at the relevant time.

I understand that Members and the wider community are also seeking clarity in relation to the impact these developments will have upon the Assembly. While there may be some minor changes to deal with at this time (for instance there will be no Question Time to The Executive Office on Monday 7 February), the functions of the Assembly remain the same until the dissolution of the Assembly, which is expected to occur at 00:01 on 28 March 2022.

The vacancies in the offices of First Minister and deputy First Minister are of course a serious matter for the Assembly. Clearly Ministers themselves will have regard to how the absence of an Executive may impact on their responsibilities, the decisions they can take and the business they can bring to the Assembly. However, Executive procedures are not a matter for the Speaker.

The Assembly will continue to carry out business until dissolution takes place. The Business Committee will schedule sittings of the Assembly as normal and the scrutiny of Executive legislation and Private Members' Bills going through the Assembly can continue. While the wider political environment may not make things easier, I will remain focused on working with parties to deal with as much legislation as possible in the time available.

I appreciate that these matters will be a cause for concern and that all Members will wish to see these issues resolved as quickly as possible. I will update the Assembly as necessary.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alex Maskey". The signature is written in a dark ink and includes a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**ALEX MASKEY MLA**