

# Written Ministerial Statement

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## Regional Development

### UTILITY REGULATOR'S REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF THE INDUSTRIAL ACTION IN NI WATER

*Published at 12.00 noon on Tuesday 30 June 2015*

**Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development):** I wish to make a Statement to the Assembly in respect of the publication of the Utility Regulator's Review of the Impact of the Industrial Action in NI Water.

I asked the Utility Regulator, in February, to review NI Water's performance in managing the disruption to water supply in parts of Northern Ireland arising from the industrial action by NI Water staff. In particular, I asked the Regulator to focus on the impact on consumers and NI Water's actions in planning for and reacting to the event.

I now welcome the completion of the Review and the publication of the Report. I am grateful to the Regulator for undertaking this thorough Review on the Impact of the Industrial Action.

The Report focuses on five areas: the impact and cause of the water supply disruptions; contingency planning and implementation arrangements; internal and external communications during the incident; leadership and management and the financial impact of the dispute.

The Regulator's findings indicate that NI Water has made significant progress following the review of its handling of the 2010-11 Freeze / Thaw Incident, particularly in the area of communications with stakeholders and customers. However, the Report has identified areas where further improvements should be made. It details eleven actions which it requires NI Water to undertake, these are strategic and high level. NI Water has also identified a number of actions to be taken as a result of its own internal review, which informed the Regulator's work.

The Regulator has required NI Water to develop a work programme, by the end of June. This will include a plan to deliver all actions by the end of March 2016. In addition, the Company must highlight all actions relating to winter preparations and ensure that these are completed by November 2015. The Regulator will monitor NI Water's implementation of the actions against the plan.

Implementation of the actions required by the Regulator will improve the resilience of NI Water's assets and the Company's ability to respond to incidents in future.

In addition the pay settlement reached with NI Water employees secured the commitment of the Water Group of Trade Unions to work positively, actively and jointly with NI Water to make progress on the modernisation of working practices. I believe that this will also contribute to NI Water's goal of improving the level of service provided to its customers in future.