

WRITTEN STATEMENT TO THE ASSEMBLY ON THE APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM HOCS

First Minister and deputy First Minister: We are writing to inform Members that we have engaged Jenny Pyper to undertake the role of interim Head of the Civil Service.

We wrote to Members on 26 September to advise that a recruitment competition to fill the HOCS post regrettably did not result in an appointment being made, and that we were working to put in place appropriate interim arrangements. We gave careful consideration to a range of options and the relevant NICS policies and the requirements of the Civil Service Commissioners.

We have now jointly agreed to engage Jenny Pyper as Interim HOCS.

Jenny will take up the role on 1 December and it is intended that this will last for eight months, during which time the HOCS position will be reviewed and the process to fill it will be developed. Once this work is completed, we will be in a position to launch the relevant recruitment campaign to fill the role on a substantive basis.

This will be a critical period for the Executive as we deal with a number of pressing issues, not least the end of the EU Exit transition period; and our response to, and recovery from, the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have agreed that Jenny will chair a newly-established Covid-19 Taskforce, which will deal with crucial issues such as vaccination rollout, mass testing and compliance.

As set out in New Decade, New Approach, the Executive is committed to further reform of the Civil Service, as well as significant and ambitious reforms in the development of an outcomes-based Programme for Government. This will involve working in partnership with society and across all sectors to develop and deliver a PfG that will improve the lives of all the people of Northern Ireland.

While this will be a temporary role, it is a crucial one at a time of significant challenge and

with substantial work to be done.

Jenny Pyper has a wealth of experience in public service and leadership, most recently as Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation; and we believe she is well placed to lead the NICS and support the Executive through these unprecedented times.

We would like to put on record our gratitude to the Permanent Secretaries and senior leadership team of the NICS for the critical work they have undertaken during these unprecedented times; and indeed to colleagues in all parts of the Service who have not only played a vital role in responding to the pandemic, but have supported the continued delivery of services to citizens in the face of many challenges.

We very much look forward to working with Jenny and wish her well as she undertakes the Interim HOCS role.

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

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