

# Written Ministerial Statement

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

## Department of Education

### CALL FOR PUBLICATION OF A NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL SERVICE HR REVIEW

*Published at 1pm on Friday 27 March 2026*

**Mr Givan (The Minister of Education):** In the House on 23 March during Topical Questions, I was asked by a number of Sinn Fein MLAs whether I had ever been subject to an Investigation in relation to allegations of bullying within the Department of Education. Given the repetition of such inuendo outside the House I want to restate unequivocally that I have never been the subject of any such Investigation.

When I sought clarification from the MLAs about the basis for their questions, no details or specific allegations were provided. On further reflection, it is possible they were alluding to a confidential NICS HR Review into the conduct and performance of a civil servant. However, because the questions were based on a false premise, I cannot be certain that this is what was in fact being referred to.

The Departmental Solicitors Office informed me that the report was commissioned solely to inform potential performance management action in respect of the civil servant. It is therefore an internal employer/HR document produced exclusively to support decision making under the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Performance Management framework.

The Head of the Civil Service has confirmed that the matter referenced was led by her, in her capacity as Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and it concerned internal management/HR matters.

It was neither a disciplinary determination nor a legal process. She further confirmed that the issues being progressed are management, organisational and NICS policy matters, and do not relate to any individual Minister.

As this is a confidential HR matter, I do not feel it is appropriate to comment in any detail on this issue. What I can say is straightforward: I was interviewed solely as a witness in this Review concerning the conduct and performance of a civil servant. I was not the subject of that Review.

The civil servant concerned, at a time when they were no longer working with or to me, in fact some nine months later, made assertions that my concerns, raised by me with the Head of the Civil Service, about their conduct and performance, constituted bullying. These assertions were never part of the Review's Terms of Reference, which were settled in December 2024, and in any event, I understand that the reviewer rejected these assertions. In the interests of transparency, I welcome the opportunity to clarify this position and to set the record straight.

I welcome publication of all material relating to the NICS HR Review.

**Paul Givan MLA**

**Minister of Education**