

# Written Ministerial Statement

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

## The Executive Office

### **PUBLICATION OF THE COVID-19 MODULE 1 REPORT BY THE RT HON THE BARONESS HALLETT DBE**

*Published on Thursday 1 August 2024*

**Ms O'Neill and Mrs Little-Pengelly (The First Minister and deputy First Minister):** Baroness Hallett, the Chair to the UK-wide Covid-19 Public Inquiry, published her findings of Module 1 of the Inquiry on 18 July 2024. Module 1 of the Inquiry opened on 21 July 2022 to look into the preparedness for the pandemic to assess if the pandemic was properly planned for and whether the UK was adequately prepared. The module touched on the whole system of civil emergencies including resourcing, risk management and pandemic readiness and scrutinised government decision-making relating to planning to identify lessons that can be learnt. Public hearings for Module 1 ran for six weeks from 13 June to 19 July 2023, during which time a wide range of witnesses provided evidence to the Inquiry.

We recognise that publication of the report represents a significant milestone for families of those who lost loved ones during the pandemic and for those who continue to be impacted by the pandemic.

Baroness Hallett has advised that following publication of the Module 1 report, she expects a substantive 6-month update on the implementation of the recommendations.

TEO is establishing a cross-departmental steering group to consider and progress implementation of the recommendations. This group must be inclusive as it is inevitable that at least some of the recommendations may need Executive consideration.

We welcome the report and would like to thank the Chair for the work of the Inquiry. The report contains a number of recommendations that focus both on cross-cutting systems and processes across the UK as well as on some that are specific to Northern Ireland.

It is important that we take time to consider the report and the recommendations in detail before making any further comment.