

PERMANENT SECRETARIES' STOCKTAKE (PSS)
Friday 16 January 2026 @ 9am
Executive Room, Stormont Castle

In attendance:

Jayne Brady (Chair)	Ronnie Armour	Deborah Brown
Louise Crilly	Mike Farrar	Neil Gibson
Katrina Godfrey	Alex Gordon	John Greer
Gareth Johnston	Declan McGeown	Ian Snowden

Jayne Byrne (Secretariat)

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apology received from Hugh Widdis and David Malcolm. Deborah Brown deputised for HW and Gareth Johnston for DM.

2. Minutes 9 January 2026

The minutes of the meeting are currently under consideration.

3. Executive Business

NG provided Perm Secs with a high-level update on budget.

4. TOUR DE TABLE

4.1 **DSO:** LC provided an update on a recent court case.

4.2 **DoH:** MF provided an update on budget and pay management issues, hospital service pressures, and commentary from recent meeting of the PAC.

4.3 **FLC:** AG advised of the launch of the Legislative Counsel Grade 7 (Principal Legal Officer) recruitment campaign on Monday 19 January 2026.

4.4 **TEO:** GJ advised on an issue with regards the role of EIS. LC agreed to provide guidelines to HoCS for issue to Perm Secs.

Action: LC provide guidelines to HoCS for issue to Perm Secs.

4.5 **DfI:** DMcG advised of an upcoming issue and the need for staff welfare support, the Transport Hub, forthcoming budget discussions, and advice on a staff issue.

4.6 **DoJ:** DB provided an update on budget and Criminal Bar strike. LC declared a conflict of interest.

4.7 **DfE:** IG advised of a positive week in moving a number of issues forward which included RHI, potential investment, and Magee Taskforce.

- 4.8 **DoF:** NG provided an update on building regs paper, contingency planning issue, progress being made on job professions, ARAC central register, NIAO review of the capacity & capability report.
- 4.9 **DfC:** JG provided an update on budget, staffing, teams, digital transformation, and quarterly update to the Committee for Communities. JG also provided an update on a recent meeting of the Recruitment Steering Group.
- 4.10 **DE:** RA provided an update on pay, implementation of the workforce review, budget and upcoming series of webinars on budget, a recent school issue and an Honours query.
- 4.11 **DAERA:** KG provided an update on a recent engagement with NILGA & SOLACE and separate engagement with NIAO regarding a future feasibility study.
- 4.12 **HoCS** provided an update on recruitment, Transformation Fund, future appointment of a Chief Digital Officer, and upcoming SCS career development moves.

5. Date of next PSS Meeting

- 5.1 The next meeting of PSS will take place on Friday 23 January 2026 at 9.00am in the Executive Room, Stormont Castle.