

NICS SENIOR LEADERSHIP GROUP (SLG)
Friday 28 August 2026, 09:00am
Executive Room, Stormont Castle

In attendance:

Jayne Brady (HoCS) (Chair)
Moirá Doherty (MD)
Neil Gibson (NG),
Alex Gordon (AG)
Ian Snowden (IS)

Louise Crilly (LC)
Mike Farrar (MF)
Katrina Godfrey (KG)
Grainia Long (GL)
Hugh Widdis (HW)

Paul Brush (PB) obo David Malcolm
Susan Anderson (SA) obo Emer Morelli

Jayne Byrne (Secretariat)

1. Welcome and Apologies

HoCS noted apologies from David Malcolm and Emer Morelli, welcomed members to the meeting and those deputising.

2. Minutes & Actions arising from SLG 21 August 2026

The minutes of the 21 August 2026 meeting were agreed, and members noted that actions are progressing.

HoCS thanked departments for the returns received to date on the Affordability Exercise and the Internal Audit Service Insights report. A summary of responses will be presented at a future meeting.

SLG requested that actions requiring a response from SLG meetings be formally commissioned to avoid any issues.

Action: Secretariat to ensure all actions, requiring a response, are formally commissioned.

3. Budget Update

NG provided an update on budget matters and advised that a request for further information had issued to departments. Members noted that Finance Directors were aware of the request. There was discussion on the need for clear and consistent communication around budget matters and other issues.

4. Preparedness for incoming Executive

SLG discussed potential matters for consideration for an incoming Executive including a timeline of key milestones for the remainder of this mandate.

5. AOB

5.1 NISRA Sickness Absence Statistics

SLG noted the publication of the latest NISRA sickness absence position and noted this matter will be discussed in detail at the next SLG NICSHR session which is scheduled for the beginning of October.

5.2 EVAWG Inter-departmental WG

MD asked SLG to give consideration to the request for membership to the EVAWG programme board.

5.3 SLG noted the **SLG Forward Workplan** which includes engagement with the NIO Perm Sec.

6. Tour de Table by exception

DAERA: KG reflected on learning for cross-departmental groups from a recent court judgment and noted that work on a new UK/EU SPS agreement was entering an important phase.

DE: PB provided an update on SEN placements and LRA negotiations.

DoJ: HW thanked colleagues for SCS input to the consultation exercise on reducing offending and reoffending.

DoF: NG provided an update on parity issues and the need to agree a position on resourcing corporate communications.

OLC: AG advised that planning for 2027-28 would be considered at the next Legislative Programme Board.

DfI: SA advised on upcoming legal matters and current issues.

DoH: MF advised that preparation was underway for the SLG session on public inquiries and provided an update on industrial relations.

DfC: GL advised of the launch date for the Home Heating Oil Support Scheme.

DSO: LC provided an update on a number of legal issues and advised that her team is developing training for the NICS on secondary legislation as part of the L&D package.

7. Date of next SLG meeting

Next meeting: Friday 1 September 2026 at 09:00-10:30 in the Executive Room.

@ 10.45 am meeting concluded