

NICS SENIOR LEADERSHIP GROUP (SLG)
Friday 31 July 2026, 09:00am
Executive Room, Stormont Castle

In attendance:

Neil Gibson (NG), Chair
Mike Farrar (MF) - *virtually*
David Malcolm (DM)
Ian Snowden (IS)
Alex Gordon (AG)

Moira Doherty (MD)
Katrina Godfrey (KG)
Emer Morelli (EM)
Hugh Widdis (HW)

Linsey Farrell (LF) obo Grainia Long
Joanne Timoney obo Louise Crilly

Jayne Byrne (Secretariat)

1. Welcome and Apologies

Neil Gibson chaired in the absence of HoCS. Apologies received and noted as set out above.

2. Minutes & Actions arising from SLG 24 July 2026

The minutes of the meeting of 24 July 2026 were discussed and it was agreed SLG would reconsider the minutes and provide feedback to the Secretariat. Minutes to be considered at the next SLG.

Actions from the previous meetings were reviewed.

3. Summer preparedness

DfI, DfE and DoJ each provided updates and confirmed that preparations are in hand. Messaging on travel has been shared with EIS.

4. NI Budget Update

NG provided an update on engagement with, and requests from, UKG/NIO, as well as the wider budget position.

The Group discussed the need for a consistent approach on MPM, including a holistic approach to pay across the public sector and the importance of the affordability Grip exercise. It was noted that Section 59 letters would issue today, providing a position to the end of September 2026.

5. Tour de table

5.1 DfI: EM advised UKG Zero Omissions Vehicles consultation to launch today and may have impact for other departments.

5.2 DfE: IS provided an update on energy supply; a pay issue at Airbus; a potential large scale private sector investment in NI; and VAT on electricity bills.

- 5.3 DE:** DM provided an update on a recent media article regarding a DP competition trawl. The Group noted comments on the SCS recruitment competition process.
- 5.4 DfC:** LF advised that preparation for bilateral meetings with departments on the anti-poverty strategy was underway. Departments would be contacted in due course.
- 5.5 DAERA:** KG provided a further update on industrial relations and drew attention to a recent communication regarding mileage.
- 5.6 DOJ:** HW provided an update on prison population.
- 5.8 DOH:** MF provided an update on potential strike action, delivery of the SEN Summer Schemes, and future opportunities arising from the Strategic Health and Economic Partnership.

6. Date of next SLG meeting

Next meeting: Friday 14 August 2026 at 09:00 in the Executive Room.

Meeting closed 10.25am