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**To:** All Staff <All\_Staff@nio.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** How we are organising for Covid-19  
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Dear colleagues

Ahead of the all staff call at 11am this morning I thought it would be helpful to set out how we are organising ourselves within NIO to deal with this challenge.

The Cabinet Secretary has said that all departments should now make the C-19 campaign their main effort alongside essential operational business. In this respect the fundamental role of our department is to support and align the UK and NI Executive responses to Covid-19, taking account of developments in Ireland, working to keep people safe and minimising the harm to the economy in Northern Ireland.

As Madeleine said last week, everyone has a part to play in this: some will stay in current roles, for others work may have a different focus, and we will ask a number of you to move temporarily to different roles in support of government priorities. Remaining flexible will be key to ensuring we are able to respond appropriately.

There are a number of elements to our response covering our central team and supporting new structures the Prime Minister's put in place to lead the Government's key lines of operation. The new structures are:

- Healthcare: Lead DD Holly Clark. This group will focus on NHS preparedness, notably ensuring capacity in the critical care system for those worst affected, the medical and social package of support for those to whom we will be providing the new shielding regime;
- General Public Sector: Lead DDs David Holmes/Becca Nugent. This group will focus on preparedness across the rest of the public sector and critical national infrastructure;
- Economic: Lead DD Stephen Rusk. This group will focus on the economic and business impact and response, including supply chain resilience. This team's priority will be to minimise the impact on the economy and livelihoods in NI. Please contact this team using the Covid economy email address.
- International: Lead DD Paul Flynn. This group will focus on international coordination through the G7, G20 and other mechanisms, including like-minded groups, and the UK five-point plan. From our perspective it will include relations with Ireland. And we are fully linked in with our Embassy colleagues in Dublin who are helping us reach into the Irish system.

Within the NIO we have put in place the following arrangements:

- Covid-19 central team: Holly Clark is leading the policy response with Whitehall and NICS. Their objective is to coordinate the NIO's inputs into the Covid-19 response, ensuring Northern Ireland's interests are reflected and understood. The team will be the main interface with TEO. Please use the Covid-19 email address to contact the whole team at the same time.
- Cabinet Office liaison: These Implementation Groups will be supported by the Cabinet Secretariat, and we will have NIO liaison officers working there to ensure we are properly plugged into what's going on.
- NICS liaison: TEO have set up a 'NI Hub' to manage impacts from Covid-19, on a similar model (but smaller scale) to the No Deal C3 structures. We will have liaison officers working with the Hub to ensure that we're properly plugged into structures and decisions made by NICS. And Mark Larmour will link into the Executive's Central Coordination Group meeting each day.
- Departmental Response: Mark Byers will continue to lead our departmental response. We will continue to move staff into Covid-19 facing roles as needed. And we have shifted almost the entire

organisation to working from home over recent days. Mark's team will continue to keep the department running over coming weeks. We need to be ready to come out the other side; onboarding and recruitment needs to continue.

In all of this work we need to act in accordance with our values and the flexibility with which the department is associated. I am therefore very grateful to all those who have showed such flexibility and willingness to be part of the new structures.

Stay safe and look after each other.

Colin

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Colin Perry, Director, Northern Ireland Office

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