

**FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY**  
Mike Brennan



**From:** Mike Brennan  
DfE Permanent Secretary

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**To:** Sue Gray  
DoF Permanent Secretary

**Cc:** HOCS  
Permanent Secretaries

### **COVID-19 RE-PRIORITISATION EXERCISE**

1. I refer to your note of 18 May to Permanent Secretaries, which commissioned the re-prioritisation exercise.
2. I personally find the timing of this exercise somewhat premature, particularly given that it is being commissioned at a time when Departments are already in the midst of preparing their June Monitoring returns.
3. You have indicated that there is a pressing need to review existing pressures and provide the most up to date position, and re-prioritise budgets to help address the COVID-19 pressures that departments have identified this financial year. I could not agree more. But a complete understanding of those pressures, which must be the starting point for any re-prioritisation exercise, will not be known until June Monitoring has been concluded.
4. As far as my own Department is concerned, a significant number of new Covid-19 pressures (bids) will be made in monitoring, and after a significant internal reallocation has already been undertaken.
5. I fear that commissioning the Second Stage at this time, laudable as the intent might be, is unlikely to identify any meaningful savings. This is more likely to be successful when the full extent of the task at hand is determined, and after the Executive is fully appraised of the position.
6. In my opinion, you should consider deferring the Second Stage until June Monitoring is concluded.

PD

**MIKE BRENNAN**  
Permanent Secretary