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TO: PERMANENT SECRETARIES

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RETURN OF MOBILE DEVICES USED BY FORMER MINISTERS AND SPADS TO DEPARTMENTS TO ALLOW POTENTIALLY RELEVANT DISCLOSURE MATERIAL FOR THE INQUIRY TO BE IDENTIFIED AND EXTRACTED.

Background

I shared the draft report from the Fact-Finding Investigation into mobile devices issued to former Ministers and Special Advisors with you previously and can advise you that this is in the process of being finalised.

Now that the investigation is complete, it is important that the recovered devices are now interrogated by your officials to determine what information, if any, is on them.

Proposed next steps

I would be grateful if you could arrange for the devices that were recovered by the Investigation team to be collected by your Covid Inquiry Team for them to work with Private Office colleagues to interrogate the devices and determine what information is on them.

In order to facilitate a complete picture to be collated, it would be helpful if the following information could be sent to the TEO Covid Inquiry Team for each device:

- Type of device
- Device serial number
- Person the device was issued to
- Has the device been reset – Yes or No
- If not, is there any information on the device?
- What platform is the information held on, for example, Outlook, WhatsApp, SMS
- Is the information relevant to the work of the Covid-19 Inquiry?

- Will the information be submitted to the Covid-19 Inquiry?

The TEO Covid Inquiry Team will provide a template to for your team to collate this information.

It is essential that this work is progressed as soon as possible. The devices that were recovered by the Investigation Team are currently held in Craigantlet Building, Stormont Estate and can be collected from there. Alternatively, arrangements can be made for the Investigation Team to deliver the devices to your offices. Grateful if Tracey McCavigan (tracey.mccavigan@finance-ni.gov.uk) or NR @finance-ni.gov.uk could be contacted to arrange collection.

I am sure you appreciate the urgency of this work given the intense interest by the Chair of the Inquiry in informal communications used by Ministers and Officials. We are a fairly advanced stage in Module 2 and associated sub-modules for Devolved Administrations and timely disclosure of any potentially relevant material is a priority.

If you have any queries, please contact Jane Holmes in TEO on jane.holmes@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk or on Irrelevant & Sensitive

Personal Data

JAYNE BRADY
Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service