

TAOISEACH VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND

STEER

1. You are due to meet Micheál *[Me-haul]* Martin on Thursday on his first visit to Northern Ireland as rotating Taoiseach. This will provide you with the opportunity to personally congratulate him on his appointment and reinforce the importance of maintaining and strengthening the close ties between Ireland and the UK.

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OTHER TOPICAL ISSUES

Covid-19

- I am working closely with the First Minister and deputy First Minister and the rest of the Executive to deliver a co-ordinated approach in responding to Covid-19. My officials and I are in daily contact with Northern Ireland businesses and representatives of other sectors across Northern Ireland to work with them.
- Covid-19 is on the decline in NI. In recent weeks we have had a number of days with no new positive cases being reported by laboratories and deaths are falling. It is also extremely heartening to hear there are currently no COVID-19 related patients in ICUs in Northern Ireland.
- Every death from this virus is a tragedy and we recognise the work of our social care workers, nurses, doctors and many others on the frontline over the last few months.

Background

- *As of 0900, 13 July for NI:*
 - *155,009 HSC Laboratory tests have been completed This equates to 122,403 individuals being tested).*
 - *5,790 confirmed cases in Northern Ireland with 20 positive cases in the last 7 days (down 4 from last week).*
 - *The total coronavirus deaths (confirmed by a positive test) is 556.*

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