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Clare House
303 Airport Road West
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Tel: 028 9081 6338
Email: private.office@finance-ni.gov.uk

Your reference: *Insert if appropriate*
Our reference: *GM-1891-2024*

Date: *December 2024*

Dear [REDACTED],

Extending the Bereavement Service

Thank you for your letter of 22nd November about the Bereavement Service in Northern Ireland.

There are undoubtedly many benefits to the “Tell Us Once” service that exists in Britain, including making life a little easier for someone who suffers a bereavement at that difficult time.

The structure of how public services are delivered here makes implementing such a service quite challenging. To extend the Bereavement Service provided by the Department for Communities (DfC) to mirror the “Tell us Once” service, is likely to be complex, involving legislative change to facilitate data sharing and an assessment of the extent to which interfaces can be established between the separate, standalone IT systems used across the public sector. This would require Executive approval, be subject to establishing affordability and securing the necessary funding.

DfC has committed to further preliminary investigation to better understand the size, scale and cost of the work that might be involved and the technical feasibility. DfC will also engage with counterparts in other departments to identify if there is any potential for more incremental enhancements to its existing Bereavement Service and DoF will lend our expertise to these discussions. The Department of Finance will support this work and work closely with colleagues in DfC.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
DEPARTMENTAL ASSEMBLY LIAISON OFFICER

**REQUEST FROM: FINANCE COMMITTEE – GM-1854-2024 – DALO READOUT –
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER**

Point 5 – Extension of the Bereavement Service – Letter from Dr Bridget Meehan / Advice NI

- Officials within Land & Property Services (LPS) are cognisant of the difficult circumstances faced by families following a bereavement. In recent months, Land & Property Services have gained access to bereavement information held by the General Register Office and are working on developing processes to improve the expediency of updating rate accounts following the passing of a ratepayer.
- Chris Rooney, Director of Revenue & Benefits in Land & Property Services is making arrangements to discuss the work currently in progress within LPS with Dr Meehan and to explore opportunities to develop further improvements in this area.
- LPS Officials will also contact the Bereavement Service to discuss the potential for greater data sharing between the departments.

Answer prepared by and further information available from:

Name: Chris Rooney

From: NISRA Ministerial <NISRA.Ministerial@nisra.gov.uk>

Sent: 17 October 2025 10:48

To: DoF Private Office <Private.Office@finance-ni.gov.uk>

Cc: Rooney, Aoife <Aoife.Rooney@finance-ni.gov.uk>; Riley, Becci <Becci.Riley@finance-ni.gov.uk>

Subject: GM-0794-2025: For Action: Finance Committee DALO Readout 8 October (issued 10 October) - NISRA return

Private office

Please see attached response from NISRA

-----Original Message-----

From: DoF Private Office <Private.Office@finance-ni.gov.uk>

Sent: 10 October 2025 11:51

To: NISRA Ministerial <NISRA.Ministerial@nisra.gov.uk>

Cc: Conlan, Ciarrai <Ciarrai.Conlan@finance-ni.gov.uk>; DoF Private Office <Private.Office@finance-ni.gov.uk>; DOF PressOffice <dof.pressoffice@finance-ni.gov.uk>; McLaughlin, Mark <Mark.McLaughlin@finance-ni.gov.uk>; Dawson, Paula <Paula.Dawson@finance-ni.gov.uk>; Gibson, Neil <Neil.Gibson@finance-ni.gov.uk>; Wales, Philip <Philip.Wales@finance-ni.gov.uk>

Subject: GM-0794-2025: For Action: Finance Committee DALO Readout 8 October (issued 10 October) - NISRA return

GENERAL MAIL

Raised By: Committee for Finance Chairperson

Reference: GM-0794-2025

Subject: GM-0794-2025: For Action: Finance Committee DALO Readout 8 October (issued 10 October) - NISRA return

Referred To: NISRA MINISTERIAL

Date referred: 10/10/2025

ACTION REQUIRED

Please see attached readout from Finance Committee on 8 October (PAGE 7)

Please provide comment/briefing for point 9

Please provide to private.office@finance-ni.gov.uk not later than 17/10/2025

For further information etc. contact:

[REDACTED]

Minister's Private Office

[REDACTED]

Copied To For Information:

All Papers CC; Wales, Philip

REQUEST FROM: FINANCE COMMITTEE – DALO READOUT - MEETING WEDNESDAY 08 OCTOBER 2025

Point 09 – “Tells Us Once” meeting

Response –

- Minister O'Dowd met with Minister Lyons on 29 September 2025 to discuss a range of issues, including the possibility of extending bereavement services to facilitate a “Tell Us Once” service here.
- The Ministers considered several issues involved with provision of this service, those being the necessary legislative changes along with technological and resourcing requirements to progress the matter.

- Following this meeting it was agreed that officials in both DoF and DfC would take forward work to clarify the details of precisely what legislative changes would be required and if they could be achieved in this current mandate.
- After the enactment of the Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Bill and the establishment of the Baby Loss Certificate Scheme -officials will carry out additional research into the operational options available should the legislative changes be achieved. This would include a meeting with colleagues in HMRC to consider the possibility of connecting directly to the existing Tell Us Once system utilised in England, Wales and Scotland.