

Appointment of Permanent Secretary at the Northern Ireland Office

The Cabinet Secretary Sir Mark Sedwill, with the agreement of the Prime Minister, has today announced the appointment of Madeleine Alessandri as the new Permanent Secretary at the Northern Ireland Office.

Madeleine is currently serving as the UK Deputy National Security Advisor and Prime Minister's Adviser on National Resilience and Security. The appointment follows the announcement in October 2019 that Sir Jonathan Stephens will be retiring from the Civil Service in early 2020.

Welcoming Madeleine's appointment, the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Mark Sedwill, said:

Madeleine is an exceptional public servant who embodies the very best that the Civil Service has to offer. With extensive experience in the diplomatic service and in the delivery of HMG priorities, she will be an excellent addition to the Northern Ireland Office at an important time. I'm very pleased to announce her appointment as Permanent Secretary.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Sir Jonathan, on behalf of the whole Civil Service, for his outstanding commitment and contribution to public service for over three decades, and particularly for his leadership of NIO over the last six years. I wish him all the best for the future.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Julian Smith said:

I am delighted that Madeleine will be joining the Northern Ireland Office as Permanent Secretary. She will provide experienced leadership to the Department at a critical time and I look forward to working with her for the people of Northern Ireland. I would like to thank Sir Jonathan Stephens for his sage advice and expertise, and for his commitment to the Civil Service over three decades. I wish him the best of luck in his retirement.

Madeleine Alessandri said:

This is a critical time to be joining the Northern Ireland Office as the hard work continues to restore devolved government at Stormont. I am very much looking forward to joining the Secretary of State and the great team at the NIO, and working with a restored Executive to create a stable, prosperous and safe Northern Ireland

that works for everyone.

Notes to editors

1. This appointment was overseen by the First Civil Service Commissioner.
2. Madeleine joined government service in 1988 and has held a wide variety of positions in the Diplomatic Service and in National Security both in the UK and overseas.
3. Madeleine's appointment follows the announcement in October 2019 that Sir Jonathan Stephens will be retiring from the Civil Service in early 2020.
4. There will be a handover period to ensure a smooth transition of leadership. Efforts will continue to be focused on working with the parties to get Stormont back up and running.