# Northern Ireland Executive Office criticised for lack of transparency and poor communication



A recent investigation into the workings of the Northern Ireland Executive Office has laid bare persistent issues of opacity and poor communication with both the media and elected representatives. Despite the veneer of a functioning government since the Stormont Executive reconvened over a year ago, it is clear that real transparency and accountability remain sorely lacking.

Reports from the Belfast Telegraph reveal that although Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) have resumed their duties and public events suggest normal governance, accessing substantive information from the Executive Office continues to be a frustrating challenge. The department tasked with supporting ministers and coordinating government efforts employs ten press officers meant to handle media inquiries and freedom of information requests. Yet, instead of facilitating openness, these efforts often result in silence or minimal disclosures, suggesting a government more interested in managing optics than fostering genuine transparency.

This approach is especially evident in the dysfunction of the Executive Committee at Stormont, the very body designed to scrutinize the Executive Office's actions. Alliance Party MLA Paula Bradshaw, chairing this committee, recently expressed grave frustration over the refusal or delay in receiving answers to crucial questions posed to ministers and officials. On BBC’s Sunday Politics programme, Bradshaw condemned this “real silence on so many fronts” as “not acceptable,” underlining a broader culture of evasion within the administration.

Such deliberate opacity fosters public suspicion that Stormont is prioritising superficial goodwill over confronting difficult and contentious issues head-on. The prevailing modus operandi appears to be maintaining an illusion of progress while stifling meaningful political oversight and public understanding—a narrative that fits all too neatly with recent trends in UK governance where substantive debate is sidelined in favour of checked box politics.

This pattern starkly contrasts with calls from voices on the right for a robust, transparent government that takes decisive action rather than shying away from challenges. The current administration’s continued reluctance to engage openly with scrutiny only fuels the case for a new approach—one that demands genuine accountability and delivers real solutions rather than spin.

Despite the Executive Office’s claims that ministers aim to respond to Assembly questions, committee correspondence, and media queries “within the appropriate timeframe,” those holding the government to account paint a different picture: ongoing delays, refusals, and a clear unwillingness to provide clear information.

This deeply troubling state of affairs demands scrutiny not just from within Northern Ireland but across the UK, where taxpayers expect—and deserve—full accountability from their governments. It stands as yet another example of why the public is increasingly looking to alternative political voices who prioritise transparent governance, responsible leadership, and real reform over closed-door politicking and cheap optics. Those advocating for such change argue that it is time for Stormont to abandon its culture of silence and finally allow elected representatives and the public meaningful insight into the decisions shaping their lives.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/transparency-and-open-government> - Discusses principles of open government and transparency, relevant to the critique of the Northern Ireland Executive Office's lack of substantive communication.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nio-statutory-equality-and-good-relations-duties-annual-progress-report-for-20232024> - Highlights NIO's focus on government efficiency and accountability, indirectly underscoring gaps in the Executive Office's transparency as described.
* <https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/files/niauditoffice/documents/2024-09/NI%20Audit%20Office%20-%20Coverage%20of%20The%20Executive%20Office.pdf> - Details qualified audit opinions and irregular expenditure within the Executive Office, supporting claims of financial opacity and governance issues.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-executive-office-northern-ireland> - Official portal for the Executive Office, providing contextual basis for analyzing its operational transparency and communication practices.
* <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67604b80239b9237f0915470/Northern_Ireland_Office_Annual_Report_and_Accounts_2023-2024.pdf> - Mentions risks to Northern Ireland's governance stability, reflecting broader concerns about accountability and ministerial scrutiny raised in the article.
* <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/the-valuable-scrutiny-into-what-the-ni-executive-is-actually-doing-remains-largely-hidden-behind-the-lavish-stormont-curtains/a1587034922.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data