

PAPER REQUESTED BY THE ROSEMARY NELSON INQUIRY ON THE BACKGROUND AND OPERATION OF THE KEY PERSONS PROTECTION SCHEME (KPPS)

Background

1. Successive Secretaries of State have operated a home protection scheme since the 1970s. The scheme has always been discretionary, non-statutory and publicly funded. Papers outlining the origins of the scheme are not available and assumed to have been destroyed. This paper does not therefore attempt to chart the development of the Scheme from its inception; instead it offers a summary of key events from around the time of the Belfast Agreement in 1998 from which time papers are available. The Scheme previously known as the VIP Protection Scheme is now known as the Key Persons Protection Scheme (KPPS).

Purpose of the Scheme

2. The purpose of the Scheme is to provide, at public expense, physical protection measures at the homes (and in some cases the workplaces) of those prominent people who are essential to the democratic process; the criminal justice system/administration of justice; or the law and order field, and whose death or injury from terrorism could damage or seriously undermine these key sectors of society. It is currently managed on behalf of the Secretary of State by the Key Persons Protection Unit (KPPU) which is within the Protective Security Division of the Policing and Security Directorate in the Northern Ireland Office. Prior to April 2005 the KPPU was part of Police Division within the Policing and Security Directorate. The Scheme has been periodically reviewed and modified over the years to ensure that it provides an appropriate response to the prevailing security environment.

3. The Scheme cannot, nor have Ministers ever claimed that it should, protect every person working in, or making a contribution to those particular areas of public life who may be under some degree of threat. Neither do the