

News story: Political talks update by Secretary of State (4 July 2017)

Despite the progress made by the parties to restore devolved government in Northern Ireland, gaps remain.

Following discussions with the two largest parties and with the Irish Government this morning, it is clear that these issues cannot be resolved quickly enough to enable an Executive to be formed in the immediate term.

All parties have, however, emphasised their desire to remain engaged and to find a way to return to and resolve these issues. The Government welcomes this and will do all it can to work with the parties to achieve a successful outcome. But we will not forget our responsibilities to uphold political stability and good governance in Northern Ireland. I will reflect carefully in the coming days on any further steps which may be required to support the continued effective provision of public services in Northern Ireland.

The Government remains steadfast in its commitment to the Belfast Agreement and to governing in the interests of all parts of the community in Northern Ireland.

Our overriding priority remains to reach agreement on restoring an inclusive power-sharing Executive – which is what the overwhelming majority of people across the community in Northern Ireland want and what Northern Ireland needs.