

# PM heads to Northern Ireland for discussions on restoring the devolved institutions

Devolution must be restored in Northern Ireland as soon as possible, the Prime Minister will say during a visit to Northern Ireland today (31 July 2019).

Boris Johnson will meet the leaders of Northern Ireland's five main political parties and hear from them on the progress of talks to restore the Northern Ireland Executive.

He will be joined by the new Northern Ireland Secretary Julian Smith who is representing the UK Government at the ongoing discussions.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The people of Northern Ireland have now been without an Executive and Assembly for two years and six months – put simply this is much, much too long.

Northern Ireland's citizens need and deserve the Executive to get up and running again as soon as possible, so that locally-accountable politicians can take decisions on the issues that really matter to local people.

I'm pleased to meet each of Northern Ireland's party leaders today to stress that I am going to do everything in my power to make the ongoing talks to restore devolution a success.

The Prime Minister also spoke with the Irish Taoiseach Leo Varadkar yesterday about how the UK Government will continue to work with the Irish Government to deliver a successful outcome to Executive talks.

Today's visit to Northern Ireland is Boris Johnson's first as Prime Minister and follows trips to Scotland, Wales and cities across England.

The Prime Minister talked on the steps of Downing Street about unleashing the productive power of every corner of the United Kingdom and ensuring there are opportunities for people right across the country.

He also announced this week that the Mid South West Growth Deal in Northern Ireland will receive a share of £300m new funding, to help boost business and enhance opportunities for people in the region.

Northern Ireland Secretary Julian Smith said:

The Prime Minister's visit during his first full week in office shows just how important Northern Ireland is to this government.

It is of critical importance that new momentum is now introduced to the ongoing talks process, and that all of the parties work collectively to reach agreement. I'm pleased the Prime Minister has agreed to meet each party and help drive the process forward.

I want to ensure Northern Ireland continues to thrive and intend to work alongside the PM to build a prosperous, secure Northern Ireland for everyone.