

Press release: Northern Ireland (Ministerial Appointments and Regional Rates) Bill

Bill published to set a Regional Rate for Northern Ireland and allow a new Executive to be formed.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, has introduced legislation which would set a Regional Rate for Northern Ireland in 2017-18 as well as providing an extension to the period in which a new Executive could be formed.

Published this morning, the Bill will provide for the setting of a Northern Ireland Regional Rate, enabling household bills to be issued in their usual cycle of ten monthly payments. The rate for 2017-2018 will be increased in line with inflation. It would also remove the present legal barrier to the formation of an Executive, enabling any deal reached between the parties in the coming weeks to be implemented.

Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Since the Northern Ireland Assembly election on 2 March our focus has been on re-establishing inclusive, devolved government.

The forthcoming UK General Election does not change that. This Bill will therefore enable an Executive to be formed in the coming days should an agreement be reached. However, if an agreement is not possible before the General Election, it is right that we provide flexibility for an incoming Government to act in the best interests of Northern Ireland and the space for the parties to conclude a deal.

This Bill gives the parties the legal authority to convene the assembly, appoint ministers and get on with the resumption of devolved government at any point up to 29 June. This is what the people of Northern Ireland voted for on 2 March, and should remain the focus in the weeks ahead.