

Press release: Restoration of devolution a 'priority', says Secretary of State

Secretary of State, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, has said that his priority is to restore devolution in Northern Ireland – but that it is for the political parties to find a way of making it work.

He was speaking in Dublin after a series of high level engagements with the Irish Government where the current political impasse in Northern Ireland and the impact of EU Exit were discussed.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

My priority is to see the restoration of the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland, working on a sustainable basis to deliver good government for everyone. Over the summer I have kept in touch with the political parties and I will be bringing them together over the next week as we enter a new phase of talks.

Urgent progress is required. The lack of an Executive making key decisions on matters including health and education means that public services in Northern Ireland are suffering. We need to find a way forward that will allow an Executive to be formed.

We must ensure that politicians locally are working together to strengthen the economy, to deal with the challenges and opportunities of EU Exit, and build a stronger, shared society based on respect for everyone. Ultimately, it is for Northern Ireland's political parties to find a way to make this work.

The Secretary of State met the Irish Foreign Minister, Simon Coveney TD, to discuss the next steps in the political process. The UK Government and the Irish Government have both pressed party leaders in recent weeks to form an Executive. Mr Brokenshire also met An Tanaiste, Frances Fitzgerald TD, and Justice and Equality Minister, Charlie Flanagan TD, to discuss EU Exit and security matters during his visit.

The Secretary of State took the opportunity to brief the Irish Chamber of Commerce on the recent publication of papers by the UK Government on EU Exit and its proposals to manage the border and customs arrangements between Ireland and Northern Ireland.