

Press release: Secretary of State Bradley visits Belfast

Following a tour of the facility, during which she spoke to members of staff and students, the Secretary of State addressed the media.

Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland:

I am absolutely delighted to be in Belfast and to be appointed to this important Cabinet post and I am really looking forward to getting down to work as quickly as possible. I want to work with all sections of the community here to help build a Northern Ireland that is fit for the future and that works for everyone.

During my visit to Belfast Metropolitan College, I have been struck by the wonderful education facilities that are available to students here. Throughout the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland is highly regarded for the excellent levels of education it provides, as well as the high calibre of its students – they can hold their heads high and compete with the best from around the world;

And of course I can't forget the marvellous tourism that this part of the world is so famous for – the Giant's Causeway, the Mourne Mountains and of course the No 1 visitor attraction in the world – Titanic Belfast. I know my family are already looking forward to getting to know this beautiful part of the United Kingdom.

Of course I have a very important job to do, and as I said yesterday my immediate challenge and key objective is to ensure that Northern Ireland has a devolved government in place in order to address the issues that affect everyone's lives, including health, education and the economy. I'm also conscious of the need to deliver a Brexit that works for Northern Ireland and to ensure everyone is safe and secure.

It is fitting my first visit should be to Titanic Quarter, which reflects both Belfast and Northern Ireland's past and its future. Once one of the world's leading industrial cities and now one of the world's largest urban-waterfront regeneration schemes.

And I understand the importance of dealing with the past and securing a safe and prosperous future. My aim is to work collaboratively to find solutions to these issues acceptable to everyone.

I have spoken to all the main party leaders. While there will be many challenges in the coming weeks – which all parties will need to rise to – I will do all that I can to ensure that we find a way to restore devolution to Northern Ireland.