

Press release: Secretary of State for Northern Ireland statement

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

Now that Assembly members have been elected, there is a limited window in which the Assembly and Executive can be restored. Urgent discussions need to take place to ensure inclusive devolved government resumes. These discussions will need to focus on:

- the establishment of a partnership Executive and
- addressing other outstanding issues, including the implementation of past agreements and addressing the legacy of the past.

The responsibility for forming a new Executive rests with the two parties eligible to nominate a First Minister and deputy First Minister, both to engage with each other and to advance discussions with all eligible parties. A new Executive will need to agree a Programme for Government, a budget for 2017-18 and any changes to how the Executive will work. The UK Government will engage with the parties to secure progress.

On the wider point of addressing outstanding issues, all parties eligible to nominate NI Executive Ministers will need to be involved. The UK Government and the Irish Government will also have roles to play in accordance with the three-stranded approach. Discussions will focus on securing implementation on the basis of existing commitments rather than the renegotiation of prior agreements. In particular, there is an urgent need to resolve the implementation of the commitments concerning the legacy of the past in the Stormont House Agreement.

Starting immediately, the UK and Irish Governments will work closely with the parties to secure progress on these issues. These discussions will be confidential.

Parts of this work are important. Political institutions operating on a basis of partnership, equality and mutual respect are at the

heart of the Belfast Agreement.