

SECRETARY OF STATE ACTS TO EXTEND PERIOD OF EFEF ACT TO ENSURE GOOD GOVERNANCE

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, has today introduced legislation in the House of Commons to extend the period covered by the Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions Act 2018 until 21 October, with the option of a single extension to 13 January 2020 with the approval of both Houses of Parliament. The measure is a contingency plan, if the political parties in Northern Ireland do not reach an agreement during the ongoing talks process.

The legislation will mean that an Executive can be restored immediately without further legislation. In the meantime the Northern Ireland Civil Service will continue to make decisions to protect public services and ensure good governance. The Secretary of State can call an Assembly election at any time, but will not be under an obligation to call an election until the end of the extended period.

The Secretary of State said:

“Today’s legislation is a sensible contingency plan which keeps all options open and ensures effective governance for Northern Ireland in the light of continuing uncertainty.

“The restoration of the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland over the coming weeks is my number one priority. I continue to believe a deal is achievable in the weeks ahead and I will do everything I can to make that happen. At the same time it is my responsibility to plan for all scenarios and to ensure there are effective contingency measures in place.

“This Bill is necessary to ensure good governance and the continuation of public services in the event that the parties cannot come to an agreement before 25 August. We should all encourage the parties to ensure it is not needed by restoring the Executive in the coming weeks.”