

Statement by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on the resignation of the First Minister

News story

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The decision by the DUP to withdraw the First Minister from the Northern Ireland Executive is extremely disappointing. I urge them to reinstate the First Minister immediately to ensure the necessary delivery of public services for the citizens of Northern Ireland.

The UK Government's priority is to see a strong functioning Northern Ireland Executive delivering a better, more prosperous, shared future for all the people of Northern Ireland.

We want to continue to build on the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement's promise of a stable, cooperative and respectful power sharing Executive.

The last two years since the New Decade, New Approach Agreement was reached has demonstrated the potential that can be unlocked when the Northern Ireland parties work together. We must not return to a state of political deadlock and inertia.

I recognise the impact the Northern Ireland Protocol is having on the ground. The UK Government has been clear for some time that the Protocol has been causing serious problems, unbalancing the delicate and hard-won political stability in Northern Ireland.

We remain fully committed to fixing the problems with the Protocol and to protect the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions. We will continue our intensive talks with the EU in order to resolve these.

I will be speaking to the leaders of the five parties of the Northern Ireland Executive, and the Irish Government, to encourage a return to stable devolved

government in Northern Ireland.

I hope that Northern Ireland's political leaders will take the necessary steps to restore the stability in the devolved institutions that the people of Northern Ireland deserve.

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