

Arlene Foster's statement following DUP-Tories deal

"Following the General Election results and the mandate given to us by the people of Northern Ireland, we have been in discussions with the Conservative and Unionist Party as to how we can support the minority Conservative Government in Parliament.

"Today we have reached an agreement with the Conservative Party on support for the Government in Parliament.

"This agreement will operate to deliver a stable Government in the United Kingdom's national interest at this vital time.

"Throughout these discussions, our guiding principle has been our commitment to acting in the national interest in accordance with our shared objectives for strengthening and enhancing our precious Union.

"In concluding this wide-ranging agreement, we have done so on the basis of advancing the security of our nation, building prosperity for all and supporting an exit from the European Union that benefits all parts of the United Kingdom.

"The details of our agreement and future working arrangements will be published in full.

"As part of our policy agreement, both parties have agreed that there will be no change to the pensions triple lock and the universal nature of the winter fuel payment across the United Kingdom.

"We are agreed to meet the Nato commitment of spending 2% of GDP on the armed forces and we are further committed to the Armed Forces Covenant and to its implementation throughout the United Kingdom.

"Following our discussions, the Conservative Party has recognised the case for higher funding in Northern Ireland, given our unique history and, indeed, circumstances over recent decades.

"The UK Government will publish, as an annex to our agreement, the details of financial support that will be made available to Northern Ireland.

"Our aim in these negotiations has been to deliver for all of the people of Northern Ireland, and the support measures which we are announcing will be to the benefit of all our people.

"They will boost the economy and invest in new infrastructure, as well as investing in the future of our health and education sectors and a range of other measures.

"We welcome this financial support of £1 billion in the next two years as well as providing new flexibilities on almost £500 million previously committed to Northern Ireland.

"As a consequence, spending power of almost £1.5 billion will be available to address the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland and the effect these have had on the economy and its people.

"In furtherance of our overall agreement, the Government and the Democratic Unionist Party have established a co-ordination committee.

"This agreement will remain in place for the length of the Parliament and after each Parliamentary session both parties will review the aims, principles and implementation of the agreement.

"I want to personally thank the Prime Minister and her negotiating team for the spirit in which these discussions have been conducted.

"I particularly want to acknowledge and pay tribute to the two men standing beside me, the Right Honourable Nigel Dodds MP and the Right Honourable Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP, for their efforts.

"I want to thank other party colleagues and indeed our parliamentary party, who will be to the fore in working these new arrangements.

"Today we have reached an outcome that is good for the United Kingdom, good for Northern Ireland and allows our nation to move forward to tackle the challenges ahead.

"This afternoon I will be returning to Northern Ireland to continue our discussions as we attempt to re-establish the Northern Ireland Executive, because now, more than ever, our political leaders, both locally and nationally, need to work together to find solutions for all of the people we serve."