

STATEMENT FROM:



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Sort education before bringing Hillsborough to the table

Ulster Unionist MLA Billy Armstrong has said that “education is one of the Ulster Unionist Party’s tests as to whether or not we will support the Hillsborough arrangement”.

“Our commitment to safeguarding Northern Ireland’s stability means that we are not prepared to sign up to a ‘quick fix’ that does little more than replicate the two-Party carve-up that brought us here.

“The Ulster Unionist Party has long and loudly stated its concerns over Executive dysfunctionality, and now is the time to put things right.

“Public interest in the devolution of policing and justice is negligible in comparison with the concern and anger directed at the education debacle – that is a marker that should not have been ignored.

“The real issues have been sidelined in preference for squabbling over political ideology. It is unforgivable that Prime Ministers can be flown in, working groups set up and documents produced to secure additional powers, when something as important as education has simply been allowed to by-pass the Executive table.

“The critical issues of education, health and jobs have been all but shelved while the two main Parties wrestle over policing and justice, the Irish Language and parades.

“We need to see our Executive working as it should before we load it further with this most contentious of responsibilities.

“Education is the acid test, and one of the issues that the Ulster Unionist Party must see resolved before we can make any decision on the Hillsborough arrangement.”

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