

## **Platform for Change New Politics for a New Northern Ireland**

Platform for Change is a voice for citizens of Northern Ireland who believe that now is the time for a new politics focused on the common good. It is a place for people who feel there is more to be gained from positive politics and want to be involved in transforming the region into a normal society.

### **Politics is stuck in the past**

The better life we had hoped for following the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement is not being delivered. While a fragile peace has been a huge gain in our everyday lives, the politics of recent years has too often looked backwards rather than forwards, inwards rather than outwards to the wider world. This makes no sense to a new generation of voters.

### **The potential of the agreement remains unfulfilled**

Political power and responsibility must be genuinely shared—not merely shared out—if reconciliation is not to prove an ever-receding horizon. Parties in government must work together to foster trust in society at large, so the 'peace walls' can be progressively dismantled. The main parties are vetoing each other's aims and failing to take critical decisions on key issues such as education, the economy and the environment. This is fuelling violence at the margin.

### **Devolution must deliver**

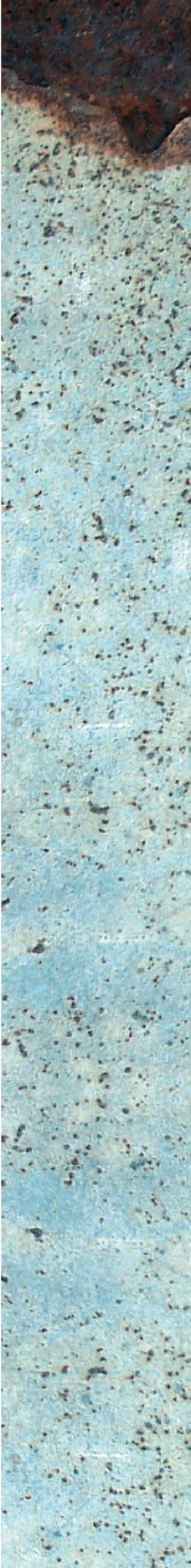
Government must be able to offer 'joined-up' solutions to problems as people experience them on the ground. The devolved executive must provide coherent leadership with a robust Programme for Government behind which all ministers unite. The assembly must be fully engaged with legislation to implement policies attuned to the needs of the region and must resolve differences through deliberation across the chamber.

Citizens need to feel they have a genuine say in government, while the social partners must be properly integrated into decision-making. And devolution must be a springboard to maximise the potential for collaboration across these islands and to build networks across Europe and beyond.

### **The people deserve an alternative**

Let's not have another assembly election which becomes a sectarian battle over which party secures the post of first minister. Let's have a first and deputy first minister who can each represent all the people of Northern Ireland. The electoral agenda should be defined by how credibly parties seeking votes indicate they will collaborate in office to produce good public policies and services, rather than how they will veto the other side.

# platformforchange



In that context, we can have a genuine debate about the political structures that best serve all citizens. More flexible arrangements, which enjoy the confidence of people belonging to all communities, could enable genuine opposition in the assembly and allow people to vote for parties or coalitions on 'bread and butter' issues rather than along sectarian lines.

Platform for Change reflects a modest and reasonable ambition for normal government. We want a strong executive, making key decisions in the best interests of all of the citizens. Platform for Change seeks solutions, engaging with young people, voters and non-voters to bring about change. It is within our grasp if, as citizens and elected representatives we all commit to the common good and come together to secure it.