

# Devolution

The Progressive Unionist Party is fully committed to maintaining and strengthening the present constitutional position of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom. We believe that the interests of citizens both British and Irish is best served politically, socially, economically and culturally is best served within the United Kingdom.

**(I)**The Progressive Unionist Party support a form of government which moves towards aligning our system to that which operates in the rest of the United Kingdom, providing an official opposition as opposed to mandatory coalition. We have promoted the concept of 'sharing responsibility' since 1979.

**(II)**The Progressive Unionist Party recognises that the United Kingdom, as outlined in the Principles of Loyalism, provides civil and religious liberties for a diverse range of peoples and communities. This is one of our defining principles as Unionists. Based upon this reasoning, we welcome incoming migrant workers and their families to Northern Ireland. We do this because, despite the media's rhetoric, we know that the majority of migrants come here to work hard, and build a decent life for themselves and their families. The principles of tolerance and respect which are at the core of British democracy argue that each group respect the traditions of the other, and live harmoniously, cooperating and sharing traditions. We believe there is strength in diversity, as can be seen from the current makeup of the Northern Irish population. Our history is rich with positive examples of economic migration and the cultural traditions which they bring. Chinese, Jewish and more recently thousands of Eastern Europeans have moved to this region, built successful work and home lives, and integrated well in Northern Ireland. As we have stated, most migration benefits our country, economically, socially and culturally. Given the current stresses on the welfare system, however, the PUP support measures which deter people from moving here in order to claim benefits. We believe that a life on benefits is not a full, rich existence, and as we want meaningful work for current residents, so too we advocate it for incoming members. We support: stronger protocols for deterring 'welfare migrants', given that as a Party, we do not see this as presenting a full and enjoyable life for incoming migrants. In addition, we support new systems which help recent migrants to settle into their new communities. This might entail programmes which twin newly-arrived families with more settled migrant families. Again, support for local communities who are adapting to changing demographics is critical to ensure that immigration is seen as a positive asset to our society. We advocate for the successful integration of all people, and this extends towards migrant families and workers. We do, however, note the potential to improve the systems which are currently in place. One example of this, reflective of the concerns of our constituents, is that we lack the checks necessary to ensure that incoming migrants do not present a criminal threat, i.e. stringent checks on criminal records. In recent years we have seen examples of foreign visitors committing serious criminal acts in Northern Ireland. A number of these people had previous convictions in their own country which were not disclosed when they applied to live in Northern Ireland. The PUP will seek more in-depth background checks on those wishing to move to Northern Ireland, as the welfare and safety of our communities is integral to our Party ethos. Given all of this, we remain committed to strength through diversity, as defined by the United Kingdom which we all support. As such, we welcome incoming migrants and all mechanisms which shall ensure their successful integration and positive contributions to our society.

**(III)**We will continue to lobby for change in the method used to fill Parliamentary positions at Westminster. We want to see a change from the archaic voting system used currently to Proportional Representation which creates a House of Commons reflective of how the public actually vote.