

Owen Smith comment on announcement of new Northern Ireland talks

Owen Smith MP, Labour's Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, commenting on the announcement that new talks aimed at restoring devolution in Northern Ireland will begin next week, said:

"Despite the new name over the door of the Northern Ireland Office, it sounds like more of the same in the talks planned for next week. Twelve months of secretive discussions between Sinn Fein and the DUP has failed and there is widespread scepticism that another round will break the deadlock.

"Karen Bradley must show that she has a clear plan to rebuild trust between the parties and restore power-sharing. This should start with enlisting an independent chair to help address concerns that she cannot be neutral given the Conservative Government is being propped up by the DUP."