

# Policy priorities for Northern Ireland

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In Pivotal's Briefing *The return of Stormont – time for real change*, we emphasised the need for the returning Executive to agree a short-term stabilisation plan for public services and budgets. This should be followed by a Programme for Government and a multi-year budget to allow planning for service delivery, workforce and transformation.

Below we suggest some of the most pressing policy issues in Northern Ireland. We offer this list to inform and encourage discussion. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Making real progress on these issues will require a period of stability, together with a commitment to working with unity of purpose towards agreed goals. There will be no quick fix for all the issues, particular given stretched budgets and a backlog of problems. However, there is the opportunity to choose some priorities that could bring big improvements to people's lives.



## Health

- Settle pay disputes and prioritise workforce planning
- Reform how health services are delivered in line with Bengoa and other independent reports
- Action plans to reduce health waiting lists to an acceptable level
- Improve access to GPs and other primary care services
- Improve access to social care including domiciliary care packages
- Funding and delivery of the mental health strategy and cancer strategy



## Economy & infrastructure

- Develop an ambitious vision for Northern Ireland's economy which is inclusive, regionally balanced and sustainable
- Prioritise improving NI's productivity by investing in skills, infrastructure, innovation and planning reform
- Set up an independent Infrastructure Commission to advise on key priorities
- Publish an anti-poverty strategy as promised in New Decade, New Approach
- Address economic inactivity so more people are supported into work



## Education

- Settle pay disputes and prioritise workforce planning
- Reverse downward trend in spending per pupil so that school budgets are sustainable
- Transform Special Educational Needs (SEN) assessment and provision
- Implementation of Fair Start recommendations to address educational under-achievement
- Develop the childcare strategy that was promised in New Decade, New Approach



## Climate change & environment

- All Executive decisions should be underpinned by sustainability
- Action plans and targets for delivery of the commitments in Climate Change Act 2022
- Economic vision to include how NI can be a world leader in green industries
- Action plan on environmental protection and biodiversity loss
- Put in place independent environmental regulation