

MAKING NORTHERN IRELAND WORK.

VOTE FOR CHANGE. VOTE ULSTER UNIONIST.

2024 WESTMINSTER MANIFESTO



**VOTE FOR CHANGE.
VOTE ULSTER UNIONIST.**

CONTENTS

A Message from the Party Leader	01
The Union	02
Windsor Framework	03
Economy	05
Taxation & Pensions	07
Health	09
A Fairer Society	12
Agriculture & Environment	17
Justice & Legacy	22
Defence & Security	25
Veterans	27
Immigration	30
Artificial Intelligence	32
Your Ulster Unionist Candidates	35

A Message From

Doug Beattie MC

Ulster Unionist Party Leader

Elections are about people and none are more important than a General Election. On the **4th July** ordinary people will make an **extraordinary decision** as they decide who they believe is best placed to represent them over the next 5 years.

As the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, I am acutely aware that we have not had a presence on the green bench of Westminster for a number of years. Northern Ireland's representation has been poorer for not having Ulster Unionist MPs making the case for Northern Ireland and our place within the United Kingdom. Our aim, this election, is to change that with your help ensuring we have an **effective and visible pro-Union voice** at Westminster.

Throughout this manifesto it will refer to **people, place, prosperity, public services and peace**. It is the 5Ps that underpins delivery; focusing on our economy in order to make Northern Ireland work for all.

The Ulster Unionist Party wants to see change in Northern Ireland. We want to see our economy grow through Foreign Direct Investment, by utilising and promoting Small, Medium and Micro enterprises, by promoting a skills agenda and an entrepreneur mentality amongst our wealth generators. We want to see stability and continuity of devolved government that is accountable and transparent adding value to daily life in Northern Ireland.

This manifesto is for you, and it is you who has the ability to create real change in Northern Ireland. It is now down to you, you have **one vote**, on **one day** with **one chance to deliver change**.

If you want change, vote for change, vote for the Ulster Unionist Party on 4th July and create the future we all want for our children.



Doug Beattie MC
Ulster Unionist Party Leader



THE UNION

The Ulster Unionist Party stands firm in our commitment to safeguarding Northern Ireland's integral position within the United Kingdom. During this potentially significant General Election, we wish to underscore the profound importance of the Union, historically and in the present day and continue to fight for its preservation.

Northern Ireland's bond with the United Kingdom is rooted deeply in history, going back for centuries. It is a testament to our **shared values, culture, and identity** that it has endured through many trials and triumphs. The Union has provided **stability, security and a framework for progress**, enabling Northern Ireland to thrive within the broader British family.

The practical benefits of Northern Ireland's Union with the rest of Great Britain are multifaceted and encompass all aspects of life.

The United Kingdom offers Northern Ireland **unparalleled economic advantages**. It allows for trade with the rest of the UK and provides **access to global markets** through the UK's extensive network of trade agreements. This strengthens Northern Ireland's economy, creates jobs, and stimulates innovation, ensuring a **brighter future for generations to come**.

One of the most cherished benefits of the Union is access to the **National Health Service (NHS)**. The NHS delivers universal healthcare, providing high-quality medical services to all regardless of their means, free at the point of use, giving us access to hospitals, GPs surgeries and prescription medicines, ensuring our families' health and well-being are safeguarded.

The **UK's Armed Forces**, where the people of Northern Ireland are over-represented by share of population, guarantees the **defence and security** of Northern Ireland. In an increasingly dangerous world, His Majesty's Armed Forces and military provides

protection from external threats and upholds the rule of law, fostering a safe environment for us all to live, work, and prosper. Ulster Unionists are **grateful for the protection our Armed Forces** provide the United Kingdom and will be steadfast in our support for service personnel, veterans and their families across the United Kingdom.

The Ulster Unionist Party is seeking to secure seats in the Westminster Parliament to **champion Northern Ireland's concerns and aspirations**. We will actively engage in parliamentary debates, committees, and legislation, **advocating for policies that benefit Northern Ireland and uphold its position within the United Kingdom**.

“Beyond the House of Commons, we will work diligently to engage with the UK government, Whitehall departments, and policymakers in London. We will strive to ensure that Northern Ireland's interests are at the forefront of decision-making processes, influencing policies that impact our economy, society, and security.”

WINDSOR FRAMEWORK



The Ulster Unionist Party is committed to defending and promoting Northern Ireland's place within the United Kingdom. During this General Election, we reaffirm our dedication to upholding the principles of the Union and ensuring that the interests of Northern Ireland are safeguarded at all levels of government.

The Windsor Framework represents a stepping-stone in addressing the challenges posed by the Northern Ireland Protocol, **a protocol that we have campaigned against since it was forced upon Northern Ireland.** While the UUP acknowledges the progress made through negotiations, **we remain vigilant in scrutinising the outworking of the Framework,** and future negotiations between Westminster and the EU, to ensure that Northern Ireland's place within the UK internal market is fully restored.

We recognise the complexities and nuances of the Windsor Framework and acknowledge that further reforms will be necessary to address constantly developing concerns. The UUP will **actively engage in democratic scrutiny** processes, both within the Northern Ireland Assembly and other relevant bodies, to challenge aspects of the Framework that undermine Northern Ireland's sovereignty and economic prosperity.

The recent resumption of the Northern Ireland Assembly is a positive step towards restoring effective

governance and representation for the people of Northern Ireland. The UUP is fully engaged in the Assembly's role in scrutinising legislation, **holding the Executive to account,** and **representing the diverse interests of the people of Northern Ireland.**

Using our representation on the **Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee** of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Ulster Unionist Party have already highlighted genuine concerns that this mechanism is already not fit for purpose. The ability to **effectively assess legislation and policies emanating from the EU** that might impact Northern Ireland's position within the UK is greatly reduced by the inability of the Scrutiny Committee to act in a collegiate manner. We will work with a new government at Westminster to **challenge any attempts to erode Northern Ireland's sovereignty or undermine the integrity of the Union** and will campaign to have the existing scrutiny processes reviewed and replaced with structures that **guarantee that safeguard.**



In Westminster, the UUP will utilise any seats gained in the 2024 General Election to **represent Northern Ireland's interests forcefully and effectively**. We will advocate for policies that promote **economic growth, protect our healthcare system, and ensure Northern Ireland's voice is heard** in national debates while also challenging, the out workings of the Windsor Framework that cause further divergence between GB and Northern Ireland.

Through active **engagement in democratic processes, robust scrutiny of legislation, and effective representation in Westminster**, we will ensure that Northern Ireland's interests are protected and advanced. With a **steadfast commitment to the principles of the Union**, the UUP will strive to secure a prosperous and secure future for all the people of Northern Ireland within the broader British family.

The Ulster Unionist Party is dedicated to defending and promoting Northern Ireland's place within the Union with the rest of Great Britain.

**PROVIDING
GOVERNANCE.**

**EMBRACING
OPPORTUNITIES.**

**LEADING
CHALLENGE.**

ECONOMY



We affirm our commitment to **supporting City Deals and Growth Deals across the Northern Ireland**, including the Belfast Region City Deal, Derry-Londonderry and Strabane Region City Deal, Mid South West Growth Deal, and Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal. With a potential investment of £1.3 billion, funded from Westminster and Stormont, these initiatives will foster **global centres of innovation excellence**. Harnessing the expertise of our universities and businesses will give Northern Ireland **unprecedented opportunities for collaboration** and drive the development of groundbreaking technologies, products, and services.

Addressing the challenges of a region and an economy still gripped in **a cost-of-living crisis**, the need is for far sighted leadership in order to achieve more **prosperous, sustainable and competitive alternatives**. Whilst agriculture is the largest industry in Northern Ireland – we feed around 10 million people across the UK and EU - and with healthy fintech, cybersecurity, aerospace and defence sectors, our neglected industry is **tourism and hospitality**.

Tourism and hospitality in NI represent around **4 - 5% of our Gross Value Added (GVA) to our economy** – that's roughly £1Bn and it employs around 65,000 directly and indirectly of our people. With the number of visitors to Northern Ireland in the region of 5.3 million annually, it represents an important industry as well as a window for the world

to enjoy our unique attractions, countryside and our welcoming population.

Yet **our tourism and hospitality sector face unfair competition from the Republic of Ireland** in terms of pricing since the Value Added Tax regime in the RoI is 13.5% - up recently from 12.5% but still a lot more attractive than the 20% VAT rate in NI. The Ulster Unionist Party will work at Westminster to **seek commitment to lower Leisure and Hospitality VAT in Northern Ireland to match the Republic of Ireland**, allowing our hotels, restaurants and leisure businesses to compete on a level playing field with our closest neighbour.

WE WILL:

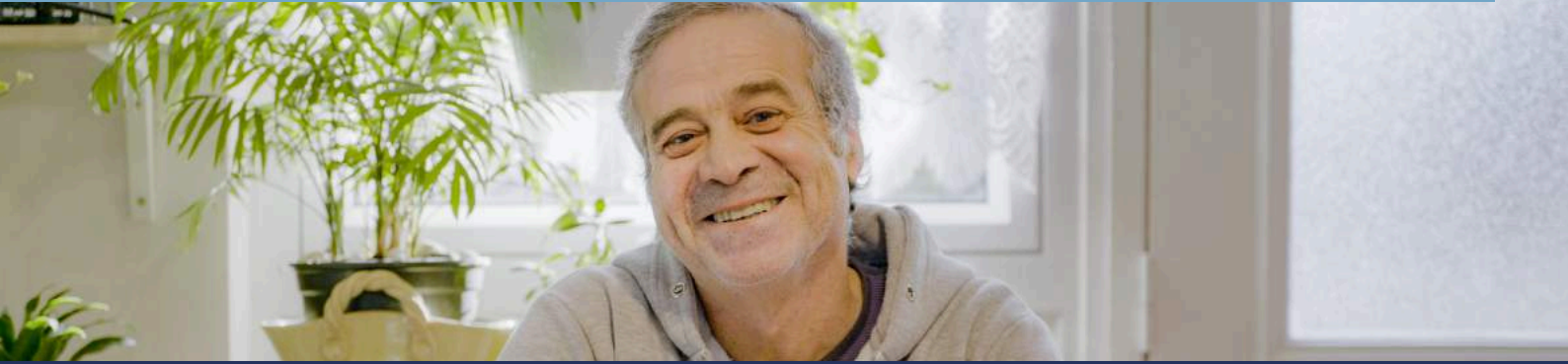
- *We will lobby in Parliament to establish a 'Freeport Northern Ireland,' capitalising on UK government policy to establish freeports nationwide. Given Northern Ireland's unique geographical circumstances and the impact of the Northern Ireland Protocol, we advocate for designating all ports and airports in Northern Ireland as freeports. This comprehensive approach will extend the benefits of freeports across the entire region, from Londonderry to Aldergrove, Warrenpoint, Belfast, and Larne. We will also argue for the creation of a 'Trusted Trader' scheme to enable businesses outside secure port zones to access processing relief at zero tariff rates, maximising economic benefits for all of Northern Ireland.*

- *Ulster Unionists are committed to fiscal responsibility and effective financial stewardship. We aim to work with Westminster to gradually reduce Corporation Tax in Northern Ireland to 15%. Despite past fiscal mismanagement, we are determined to showcase Northern Ireland's potential for responsible financial management. By implementing necessary reforms and reducing Corporation Tax, we seek to enhance competitiveness, attract investment and drive economic growth throughout the Northern Ireland.*
- *We also pledge to invest in skills development through the establishment of a Northern Ireland Job Skills Fund, akin to successful programmes in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. This fund, comprising representatives from government, business, and trade unions, will collaborate with educational institutions to provide targeted skills training aimed at enhancing productivity and bolstering the economy. We commit to dedicating funding equivalent to the UK Apprenticeship Levy paid by Northern Ireland firms, ensuring a minimum annual investment of no less than £35 million into the Skills Fund.*
- *Ulster Unionists renew our pledge to review energy security and prices, advocating for the creation of an All-Islands (UK & Ireland) energy market to leverage the benefits of greater integration with Great Britain's energy markets. This initiative will enhance energy security, reduce prices, and streamline regulatory oversight, ensuring a more efficient and cost-effective energy supply for Northern Ireland.*

“These commitments underscore our dedication to fostering prosperity, growth, and opportunity for all regions of the UK, ensuring Northern Ireland's rightful place in the global economy.”



TAXATION & PENSIONS



Ulster Unionist MPs pledge to prioritise fair and sustainable taxation policies that promote economic growth while ensuring the well-being of all citizens, including those that have retired. We firmly believe in maintaining the UK's 'triple lock' for state pensions, safeguarding the financial security of our elderly population.

The **'triple lock' for pensions** is a commitment made by the UK government to annually increase the state pension by the highest of three measures: inflation, average earnings growth, or a minimum of 2.5%. This **ensures that pensioners' incomes keep pace with the rising cost of living and national prosperity**. The Ulster Unionist Party recognises the vital importance of this policy in providing dignity and security for retirees, many of whom have contributed tirelessly to our society throughout their lives.

Furthermore, **we advocate for a progressive approach to taxation**, ensuring that the **burden is distributed equitably** and that those with the means to contribute more do so responsibly.

OUR COMMITMENTS:

- *Upholding the 'triple lock' for state pensions and implementing fair taxation policies.*
- *We reaffirm our commitment to building a society where every individual can retire with dignity and financial stability.*





**DELIVERING A
PROSPERITY
AGENDA.**

HEALTH



“The Ulster Unionist Party’s overall aim and vision is to build a world-leading health and social care system that is responsive, accessible and delivers quality care.”

Whilst we are incredibly fortunate to have **a system free at the point of delivery** – just as the NHS was originally envisaged - no one can pretend our system is functioning as it should. **Waiting times remain wholly unacceptable, demand is outstripping capacity and challenges remain on the recruitment and retention of sufficient HSC workers.**

Just like in January 2020, earlier this year the **Ulster Unionist Party took the courageous decision to return to the Department of Health.** We didn’t need to, there were several other much less challenging Department’s still available, however we stuck to our longstanding commitment that the health and wellbeing of the people of Northern Ireland was our number one priority. Despite being the only single-Minister Party within the Executive, we again demonstrated a genuine obligation by returning to what is undoubtedly **the most difficult job in the Northern Ireland Executive.**



As the newly appointed Minister of Health, Robin Swann **demonstrated leadership** by immediately **bringing stability** to a service that had been left reeling after a further period of political abandonment.

And from May this year our Minister Mike Nesbitt has been effectively leading a system that is facing some of its most **unprecedented challenges.** The greatest of which is the **devastating financial implications of the 2024/25 Budget allocation.**

We had hoped that unanimous political commitments made prior to the restoration of the Executive, that health would be the number one priority, would be honoured. **But that hasn’t been the case.**

Instead of investing in our health service, the 2024/25 Budget is delivering a record **£184m cut in funding.** Even after some incredibly difficult savings this year will be implemented – as **we remain committed to delivering** – the reality is there is a shortfall in the budget.

Whilst that remaining shortfall could be eliminated by taking drastic action by making thousands of health workers redundant, closing the equivalent of a large 500 bed hospital, and by ceasing almost 1 million

hours of domiciliary care, the **Ulster Unionist Party will not do that. Our health service has suffered enough from repeated political abandonment, and we will not allow it to be abandoned on this occasion.** Making those catastrophic impact spending cuts such as these at this time would undoubtedly inflict unprecedented levels of suffering, and so we will simply not allow patients to come to further avoidable harm.

To deliver the intended benefits for our patients and wider system, our health service **must be supported by sustainable multi-year investment.**

Yet despite the profound budget uncertainty, opportunities do remain. The momentum for transformation of service delivery has continued, especially in areas such as **elective and digital transformation.**

Whilst **many waiting times remain intolerable**, for the first-time tangible improvements can start to be seen across many specialities. There has been a **noticeable reduction in treatment waiting times**, with particular improvements in the number of patients waiting for inpatient/day case surgery for General Surgery (-21%), Trauma and Orthopaedic surgery (-8%), ENT (-16%), Gynaecology (-22%), Urology (-10%).

The Ulster Unionist Party's focus will remain on **driving through improvements in service delivery wherever and whenever possible.** That will include a renewed focus on improved productivity and efficiency to fully maximise capacity using existing resources.

OUR COMMITMENTS:

- We will continue to transform services to allow us to meet the needs of the population going forward. This will include the identification of the next Elective Overnight Stay Centre as well as further commissioned activity in Day Procedure Centres, and the continued expansion and utilisation of mega-clinics. This will be assisted by the publication of a HSC reconfiguration blueprint, the publication of a multi-year plan, as well as through the ongoing implementation of the elective care framework, the mental health strategy, and the cancer strategy.

In addition, Mike Nesbitt has brought about a renewed determination to drive improvements in population health and to address health inequalities. A new targeted and innovative health inequalities initiative will be announced in the autumn.

- Central to our healthcare system are its dedicated staff. Prior to the pandemic, systemic staffing issues persisted, resulting in a grossly undervalued healthcare workforce. We commit to our long-standing policy of maintaining pay parity, and will continue to engage with Executive colleagues in order to ensure independent pay recommendations are funded and delivered as quickly as possible.



In the meantime, we will continue to accelerate the progress and savings already being delivered by reducing the most expensive forms of agency staff, by now also introducing a new framework to limit hugely expensive off-contract medical and locum costs. This will follow the success already made in banning off-contract nursing. In parallel we will stabilise Trust non-clinical banks, and place greater emphasis and instil learnings from exit surveys to address staff turnover.

- Primary care serves as the health service's front door, handling over 90% of all contacts. Recognising its pivotal role, the Ulster Unionist Party will continue to empower primary care to deliver a broader range of services, including elective services, and commit to the further rollout of the MDT programme.

“We will remain steadfast in investment and strengthening our social care system. In order to deliver long-term sustainability of the sector it’s important that we see wages climb well beyond the lowest levels. The Ulster Unionist Party will drive through the work of the Fair Work Forum and it’s work on developing proposals to improve terms and conditions and career prospects for social care staff.”



A FAIRER SOCIETY



The Ulster Unionist Party is committed to building a fair and united society within the United Kingdom

The Ulster Unionist Party is committed to **supporting gender equality**. We will work to **remove barriers to women's participation** in employment by providing **accessible, affordable childcare and access to education, training, and transport**.

We support **flexible working and parental leave for both parents** and making progress towards gender-responsive budgeting, providing financial guidance and support as women approach retirement age, and ensuring that legislation **tackling violence against women and girls** is robust and responsive to developing challenges. We will maintain momentum in **IVF treatment availability** and ensuring Northern Ireland plays a leading role in the **UK Menopause Taskforce** to improve care and support for women experiencing menopause. We will also promote the widely accepted **definition of a woman** as an adult female and protect **women's spaces, sport and the language** used to describe women.

The Ulster Unionist Party believes in **equality for the LGBTQ community**. We support **banning the practice of conversion therapy**, introduce a policy of zero new HIV diagnoses by 2030, provide fertility services accessible to all **without discrimination**, ensure equal access to adoption and fostering and implement a zero-tolerance approach to hate crimes and harassment.

Ulster Unionist Party MPs will press the next UK government to prioritise **addressing poverty** and its devastating effects in their policymaking. This must include the abolition of the **Universal Credit two-child limit**.

Unpaid carers save the public purse nearly £6 billion in Northern Ireland every year and make an **invaluable contribution** to our Health and Social Care system. To better protect their health and wellbeing and ensure they have access to adequate breaks, there should be a **renewed focus on providing adequate respite services**.

The **Carer's Allowance benefit isn't fit for purpose** and is leaving many unpaid carers struggling to make ends meet. The Department for Work and Pensions should **increase the value of Carer's Allowance** to properly reflect carers' living costs. It should also **increase the Carer's Allowance earnings cap** so that more unpaid carers can stay in the labour market while keeping their payments.



DISABILITIES

Across the UK, around **16 million people have a recognised disability**, which constitutes about 24% of the total population. This includes 11% of children, 23% of working-age adults, and 45% of pension-age adults (*Disability, accessibility and blue badge statistics, England, 2022 to 2023 - GOV—UK; Disability facts and figures | Disability charity Scope UK.*)

In Northern Ireland, **approximately 21% of the population reported having a disability** according to the most recent surveys, a figure that mirrors trends across other regions of the UK, **indicating a rise** in the proportion of people living with disabilities.

“These statistics emphasise the significant portion of the population living with a disability, highlighting the crucial need for policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing their quality of life.”

HOUSING

The United Kingdom is in the midst of a **pressing housing crisis**, with a significant number of our citizens **lacking a secure place to call home**. This dire situation has resulted in an alarming surge in property prices and rental costs, **forcing many into a state of housing insecurity or even homelessness**.

The housing crisis is a **multi-faceted issue**, impacting various aspects of life, from health and education to the justice system. **It is imperative that all regions of the UK, including Northern Ireland, unite in their efforts to develop and implement comprehensive housing strategies to tackle this crisis.**

WE WILL:

- *Press the next Government to collaborate with the devolved administrations to develop and finance a robust strategy to tackle the housing crisis effectively.*

OUR COMMITMENTS:

- *Ulster Unionist Party MPs will advocate for the next Government to not only acknowledge the high proportion of the population living with disabilities but also to proactively develop policy interventions that improve services and the overall quality of life for these citizens.*
- *We firmly believe that the most effective way to develop these policies is by ensuring that individuals with lived experience are not just included, but are at the forefront of creating these policy interventions. Their unique perspectives and challenges are invaluable in shaping policies that truly meet their needs.*
- *Additionally, your Ulster Unionist Party MPs will work to hold the next Government to account if they fail in their duty to support our citizens living with disabilities in having active and fulfilling lives. This support must include recognising that Personal Independence Payment and other social security payments are crucial in this regard, and any attempt to scale back this support will have a far-reaching and devastating impact.*
- *We will advocate for the next Government to acknowledge the high proportion of the population living with disabilities and to proactively develop policy interventions that improve services and the overall quality of life for these citizens. This will include pressing for the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into UK law, ensuring that the rights of individuals with disabilities are fully protected and promoted.*



OUR YOUNG PEOPLE



The Ulster Unionist Party believes that the future of Northern Ireland lies in the strength and potential of our children and young people. We are committed to building a world-class education system that values every child, regardless of their ability, disability, or support needs. Our pledge is to secure the necessary funding and implement policies that will create an inclusive, supportive, and high-quality educational environment for all.

A SINGLE EDUCATION SYSTEM

We will establish a single education system that:

- Values every child equally, providing tailored support and resources to meet individual needs.
- Integrates children of all abilities, fostering a culture of inclusivity and mutual respect.
- Promotes early support and intervention, recognizing that early education and childcare are crucial for the holistic development of children and the well-being of families.

EARLY EDUCATION & CHILDCARE

To ensure that every child gets the best start in life, we will:

- Advocate for high-quality early education and childcare services that are accessible and affordable for all families.
- Support initiatives that enhance the early learning experience, laying a strong foundation for future academic and personal success.
- Enable families to thrive by providing flexible childcare solutions that support parents and caregivers.

THERAPEUTIC LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

We recognize that a well-resourced educational environment is key to fostering learning and development. Therefore, we commit to:

- Securing adequate funding to create and maintain therapeutic learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of all students.
- Ensuring that schools are equipped with the necessary resources, including modern facilities and learning materials, to support every child's educational journey.

VALUING EDUCATORS & SUPPORT STAFF

The success of our education system depends on the dedication and hard work of our educators and support staff. We will:

- Advocate for fair and competitive pay for teachers, classroom assistants, childcare staff, and the entire multidisciplinary team involved in education.
- Recognise and reward the invaluable contributions of all education professionals, ensuring they are supported and appreciated in their roles.

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

We are committed to creating equal opportunities for young people with disabilities. To achieve this, we will:

- Secure funding and resources for post-secondary education and training for young people with disabilities or learning disabilities.
- Develop pathways to further learning and employment opportunities that are on par with those available to mainstream school leavers.
- Ensure that all young people in Northern Ireland have access to the support and opportunities they need to succeed, regardless of their abilities.



The Ulster Unionist Party envisions an education system where every child and young person can thrive and reach their full potential. We will work tirelessly to secure the funding and implement the policies necessary to make this vision a reality. Our commitment is to build an inclusive, high-quality education system that prepares our children and young people for a bright and successful future.

Together, we can create a world-class education system that is a source of pride for Northern Ireland and a foundation for our shared prosperity.





**IF YOU WANT
CHANGE,
VOTE FOR IT.**

**VOTE FOR CHANGE.
VOTE ULSTER UNIONIST.**



AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT



The Ulster Unionist Party recognises the vital role that agriculture, food production, and our rural communities play in the economic and social fabric of Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom as a whole.

As the party of the Union, **we are committed to supporting our farmers, agri-food businesses, and rural areas** to ensure they can thrive and prosper.

The agri-food sector is the backbone of our rural economy, contributing over £5 billion to the Northern Ireland economy annually and employing over 100,000 people. From our **world-renowned dairy products and beef**, to our **premium quality vegetables, fruits, and specialty foods**, the **skill and innovation** of our farmers and food producers is a source of immense pride.

The Ulster Unionist Party will always champion this vital industry. We will work tirelessly to **promote and grow our agriculture and food exports, opening new international markets and supporting our producers** to meet the evolving demands of consumers at home and abroad.

Farmers are the bedrock of our rural communities. The Ulster Unionist Party recognises the immense challenges they face, from volatile market prices and spiralling input costs to the increasing burden of red tape and environmental regulations.

WE WILL:

- *Maintain and enhance Direct Payments to farmers, ensuring they receive a fair, stable income to invest in their businesses.*
- *Cut bureaucracy and streamline compliance processes to reduce the administrative burden on farmers.*
- *Increase funding for research, development and knowledge transfer to drive innovation, productivity, and sustainability across the sector.*
- *Work in partnership with farmers to develop a comprehensive, long-term strategy for the future of Northern Ireland agriculture.*



EMPOWERING RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Ulster Unionist Party understands that a **thriving rural economy** is about more than just farms and food production. It is about ensuring our villages, towns and rural areas have access to the **infrastructure, services and opportunities** they need to prosper.



WE WILL:

- *Invest in broadband, mobile connectivity and transport links to end the digital and physical isolation of rural communities.*
- *Support the diversification of rural economies, backing entrepreneurship, tourism, and other rural enterprises.*
- *Protect and enhance vital public services like healthcare, education, and policing in our rural areas.*
- *Empower local councils and community groups to shape the future of their own areas through dedicated rural development funding.*
- *Safeguard the natural environment and biodiversity of our countryside, working closely with farmers as the stewards of the land.*

“The Ulster Unionist Party is the only party that truly understands and champions the needs of Northern Ireland's farmers, agri-food businesses, and rural communities. With your support, we will ensure they have the tools and support they need to thrive in the years ahead. ”



OUR CHANGING CLIMATE



“The Ulster Unionist Party has a strong commitment to addressing the climate emergency in Northern Ireland.”

Despite being the only part of the UK without climate change legislation, the UUP actively pursued initiatives to mandate the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive to prepare Climate Action Plans and align with the rest of the UK in climate change mitigation efforts. While disappointed that our proposal for Northern Ireland's 'fair contribution' to the UK Net Zero greenhouse gas target was not fully incorporated into the final Bill, **we remain dedicated to achieving substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.**

Northern Ireland plays a significant role as **a net exporter of agri-food products**, with nearly half of all such products consumed in the rest of the UK. To meet the UK's Net Zero target, the independent Climate Change Committee has recommended an 82% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050 compared to 1990 levels. The Ulster Unionist Party embraces this recommendation and **will continue to strive for an 82% or better reduction in greenhouse gases** by 2050 as part of our comprehensive climate mitigation strategy rather than the 100% target currently enshrined in legislation.

We recognise that the **next five years are crucial in mitigating climate change**, and the Ulster Unionist Party is committed to ensuring that Northern Ireland makes a fair contribution to the goal of UK Net Zero.

As part of this commitment, **we support the UK's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution**, which seeks to mobilise public and private investment in clean technologies such as wind, carbon capture, and hydrogen. Just as Belfast and this region played a pivotal role in the world's first Industrial Revolution, we believe that investing in clean technologies will enable Northern Ireland to contribute to a **New Green Industrial Revolution** and lead the world in combating climate change.

The scale and technological advancements required to achieve these goals necessitate Northern Ireland's continued partnership within the United Kingdom.

“By leveraging our cherished position within the UK, we can access the resources, expertise, and collaborative opportunities needed to accelerate our transition to a low-carbon economy and safeguard the planet for future generations.”

WOODLANDS



Trees capture carbon and woodlands provide habitats where wildlife can flourish therefore, Ulster Unionists will plant more of the right trees in the right places and do more to look after the trees and woods we already have. This will help Northern Ireland make a fair contribution to the UK's efforts to tackle climate change whilst also helping nature to recover, reducing the risk of flooding, creating new green jobs, and improving access to trees and woods for everyone to enjoy.

OUR COMMITMENTS:

- *Ulster Unionists understand the urgent need for a collaborative effort to address the pressing issues affecting Lough Neagh's water quality and long-term sustainability. Recent multi-agency meetings underscore the necessity of establishing a management task force inclusive of all stakeholders. This task force should oversee ongoing monitoring, management and the formulation of future plans for the Lough.*
- *Collaboration among Stormont Executive departments, arms-length bodies, and stakeholders is vital to charting a viable path forward. It is important to maintain transparency and engagement throughout this process to effectively tackle the crisis affecting Lough Neagh. Our party's long-standing advocacy for a unified strategy underscores the necessity of proactive measures to safeguard Lough Neagh and its surrounding environment.*
- *Ulster Unionists will continue to press NI Water for an urgent assessment of the proximity to a critical tipping point where Lough Neagh water may become unusable for drinking. The long absence of an Executive at Stormont has exacerbated these challenges, hindering our ability to implement timely solutions.*



“The Ulster Unionist Party is resolute in its commitment to preserving the ecological integrity of Lough Neagh. Through collaborative, cross-departmental efforts, we aim to mitigate pollution, protect wildlife, and ensure the availability of clean drinking water for generations to come. All stakeholders must engage in proactive dialogue and action to address this pressing environmental crisis before irreversible damage occurs.”

**IF YOU WANT
REPRESENTATION,
VOTE FOR IT.**



**Ulster
Unionist
Party**

JUSTICE & LEGACY

Policing and Justice were devolved to Northern Ireland in 2010. From that moment it has been mismanaged, poorly resourced and badly understood. Instead of building on the resilience and commitment of a workforce and structures that were able to operate in the most difficult of circumstances and environment at pace, Northern Ireland moved to a system that gutted our Policing and Justice structures.



Our Courts are struggling to keep up with demand and our Prison Service have been left feeling **demoralised and marginalised**. None feel valued, none feel in control, all feel that they are working in a reactive atmosphere instead of a **proactive forward leaning sector**.

The confidence in the Northern Ireland justice system is at an **all-time low** where many believe **sentencing structures are broken and in need of a complete overall**. Victims and Witnesses of crime are seldom informed of the progress of their case and are further marginalised by not being informed when a prisoner is being released.

The Ulster Unionist Party will, at Westminster and in Stormont, work to ensure our Policing and Justice system are **fit for purpose**.

OUR COMMITMENTS:

- **Police first approach** - Ulster Unionists are steadfast in our support for delivering a headcount of 7,500 officers proposed by the Independent Commission for Policing in Northern Ireland over twenty years ago ("A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland" September 1999). We believe that 500 additional police officers should be recruited over the next 3 years, in addition to the normal recruitment to replenish leavers.

- **Attestation** - Police Officers should attest at the start of their training making them a legally appointed police officer from their first day, in line with other forces around the United Kingdom. This will also allow for quicker pay transition to a higher band on completion of training and after probationary periods.
- **Speeding Up Justice** – Justice in Northern Ireland takes twice as long as similar through our courts than in the rest of the United Kingdom. This has a detrimental effect on Victims and Witnesses. Even when stronger sentences are available, courts all too often impose sentences at the lower end of the scale. This has led to a lack of confidence in our justice system. The public is also left frustrated at the ease with which bail is granted and the number of defendants with multiple convictions who regard prison as an occupational inconvenience. Deterrence seems an alien concept to our system. Ulster Unionists will press for stronger sentences particularly for habitual, violent re-offenders and work to speed up the administration of justice and the time between arrest and sentencing.



- **Sentence Credit** –It is not acceptable that a perpetrator can put his victim through the trauma of a trial and on the last day admit guilt and as a consequence receive a reduced sentence. The Ulster Unionist Party will propose that this and similar practices must be stopped. This will mean longer time spent behind bars for the perpetrator and shorter licence periods. Ulster Unionists will campaign for a review of the near mandatory practice of giving serious offenders a 50/50 custodial sentence allowing for only half of the sentence to be served.

- **Stand By Victims** - All too often victims have been regarded as an afterthought by our justice system, as the focus turns to the ‘rights’ of the victim makers. Victims need to see a change in culture within the justice system whereby the State is seen to be fulfilling its duty of protecting law abiding citizens. The police solve crimes, courts hand out meaningful sentences and victims are given the support they need. Witnesses of crime are all but forgotten as our justice system creaks and slows to a near standstill. It is important that witnesses are kept engaged at every level to ensure continuity of evidence to maximise positive outcomes.

- **Reduce Legal Aid costs and Lawfare** - the legal aid bill in Northern Ireland is out of all proportion to the size of this Province costing over £90m a year according to the latest available figures. In spite of efforts to reduce the size of the bill, it is proving difficult to achieve a successful resolution. The situation is not helped by the culture of lawfare which has been allowed to develop within our legal system and which has proved extremely lucrative for a number of firms. More progress must be made to reduce the legal aid bill and a league table for those legal firms that benefit most from the legal aid system must be published. Ulster Unionists have previously called for a comprehensive review of legal aid in Northern Ireland to forensically address the issue of a legal that is by far the most generous in the whole of the UK. All options for reform should be on the table, including capping the legal aid bill

and capping what solicitors can charge for certain cases.

- **Challenge Serious and Organised crime** - far too many communities across Northern Ireland are plagued by organised criminal gangs which are involved in serious criminal activity including drug dealing. Some are regarded as paramilitary or terrorist in nature, claiming a spurious political motivation in a bid to gain some kind of legitimacy, whilst others are simply the type of organised criminal enterprises that exist in major cities in the Republic and in Great Britain.

Over 25 years on from the Belfast Agreement, it is incomprehensible that so-called paramilitary gangs are still in existence. These groups need to be put out of business permanently. Ulster Unionists want to see a concerted effort against the leadership of such groups with a focus on arrests and seizure of assets to reassure the public that crime really does not pay.

- **Resource Prisons** - the loss of personal liberty is the ultimate sanction available to the UK State for those who have broken the law and who have damaged society. Whilst rehabilitation is important where possible, we must also be mindful of the need to punish, protect society, and deter others. Ulster Unionists want to see our Prison Service given the resources they need - including a workforce that is fit for purpose with the correct numbers, terms and conditions.

It is important that we reduce the number who are held on remand in prison by finding alternative methods to deal with those bound over. Speeding up justice which will naturally reduce those on bail as they are dealt with in the court and methods such as electronic tagging must be introduced, as it is in England.



LEGACY

Dealing with legacy has been something that has plagued Northern Ireland for many years. Ulster Unionists will engage positively with the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) but remain opposed to the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act which denies justice for victims and gives amnesty to perpetrators.

The Ulster Unionist Party is also opposed to any return to the Stormont House Agreement Legacy proposals as they contain elements that both deny justice and deter truth and reconciliation.



WE SUPPORT:

- *The funding and expansion of the PSNI Legacy Investigation Branch to deal with all troubles related crime including murder, attempted murder, sexual crimes and assaults such as 'tarring and feathering'.*
- *This LIB should be enhanced by an increase in qualified homicide investigators, funded from Westminster from a multi-year budget, under the command of a Deputy Chief Constable (Legacy) answerable to the Chief Constable and with normal oversight mechanisms.*
- *The Public Prosecution Service should be split into two sections with one section looking at normal workload and the second dealing purely with legacy issues. The legacy section should be funded by Westminster from an agreed multi-year budget.*
- *The LIB and PPS (Legacy) would work within Northern Ireland and engage with other jurisdictions to investigate all troubles related crimes when information ensuring for everyone is given the opportunity for justice and accountability.*

DEFENCE & SECURITY



**We have moved
'from a post-war world
to a pre-war world'.**

The UK is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, it is a major contributor to NATO and has multi-lateral and bi-lateral defence agreements right across the globe. Collective Defence remains our greatest asset and allows the UK to continue to stand up, and speak out, in defence of freedom and democracy wherever it is threatened.

We live in a world which has never been less secure since the Cold War. There are multiple conflicts raging throughout the world in places like Syria, Southern Sudan, Mali, Yemen, the middle East and of course Ukraine. As a nation we must always remain prepared by maintaining our capabilities across the full spectrum of conflict.

For over 300 years Irishmen, and more recently women, have served in the UK Armed Forces. They have **served with distinction** at Trafalgar, Waterloo, The Somme, D-Day landings, Imjin River in Korea and more recently Iraq and Afghanistan. Those same fighting Irish were found peacekeeping in Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Mali. Their exploits are legendary, but it is the changing nature of conflicts that is of concern today.

Russia poses a genuine threat to the wider European region. Their **brutal invasion of Ukraine** has drawn battle lines between NATO and the Russian Federation along with its allies to be found in **China, North Korea and Belarus**.

The UK has led the support for Ukraine and here in Northern Ireland we have played our part with the manufacturing of NLAW missiles - the main anti-armour weapons being used by the Ukrainian armed forces. Our capacity to increase defence output remains high with the manufacture of surface to air missiles, such as HVM, to tackle Russia's increasing air power.

We have gone, according to the Secretary of State for Defence – Grant Shapps MP – **from a post-war world to a pre-war world**. This is something we must take seriously here in Northern Ireland - the UK must take Northern Ireland's strategic position seriously when defence planning.

Limited patrolling of our western approaches out to the 'Greenland-Iceland-UK Gap' undermines UK and Europe's defences. Our ability to react to Russian intelligence shipping and warships is limited and the Irish Government's ability to protect its own overseas cabling is non-existent. Ireland's preparedness is abysmal and their reliance on others unsustainable.

Across Europe nations are **committing to over 2% of their national GDP** to Europe's collective defence - all except Ireland. As our nearest neighbour their lack of defence maturity has an adverse effect on UK and Europe's ability to react to threats from Russia and their acolytes.

Therefore, it is important that Northern Ireland is brought into the UK's '**National Defence Command**' structures. This means an increase in naval assets stationed in Northern Ireland as well as an enhanced RAF presence to enable quick interception of hostile aircraft.

Both defence platforms, RN and RAF, can assist with the **protection of rapid deployments of military assets** from the US and Canada via either Shannon or Aldergrove airports. This creates two important airheads allowing for redundancy if Ireland was to regress further from providing support to deploying US assets.



WE COMMIT TO:

- *Support the establishment of a Naval Base in Northern Ireland allowing NATO assets to be deployed from here to increase patrolling of our western approaches.*
- *Encourage the Republic of Ireland to take defence seriously and enhance their Partnership and Cooperation Programme, or join NATO, and commit to spending 2% of GDP on defence.*
- *Support Aldergrove Military Base reverting back to an RAF station with the ability to forward mount air frames alleviating the burden on Scottish bases and allowing them to concentrate on the UK's Northern approaches.*
- *Vote to increase UK Defence Spending beyond the NATO Target of 2% of national GDP to 2.5%.*
- *Lobby to increase Northern Ireland's share of the defence industry manufacturing base including research and development.*
- *Maintain our Armed Forces in Northern Ireland, both Regular and Reserve, not below 3000 personnel.*
- *Continue to support our independent nuclear deterrent via the Trident systems.*

VETERANS



The Ulster Unionist Party is committed to supporting service personnel, veterans and their families across the United Kingdom. We will advocate for the retention of the Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA) with a cabinet attending Minister to ensure consistent support for veterans living in England, Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland. To enhance coordination and service delivery, we will push for the OVA to have a properly resourced presence in each of the devolved regions, which utilises the knowledge and networks built up by the Northern Ireland Veterans Support Office.

Recognising the challenges faced by medically discharged veterans, **we will commission an independent review of the medical discharge process** to identify gaps in support and inconsistencies. Our aim is to ensure that those leaving service due to injury or illness receive the full range of support they deserve as they transition to civilian life.

Northern Ireland has consistently contributed more service personnel per head of population than elsewhere in the UK. **Those who have served, at home and abroad, deserve support once they have left service.** This means delivering on the promise's made within the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Ulster Unionist Party remains dedicated to advocating for **the rights and well-being** of our service personnel, veterans, and their families, ensuring that they receive the **recognition, support, and respect** they deserve for their sacrifices and service to our country.



OUR COMMITMENTS TO VETERANS:

- *We will address existing disparities in the application of military compensation when determining eligibility for social security support across the UK. Additionally, we will advocate for the inclusion of chronic pain as a compensable condition within the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and press for the establishment of a compensation scheme for Nuclear Test Veterans and their families.*
- *Building upon previous successes we will support veteran families by removing application fees for non-UK citizens who have served in the UK Armed Forces for four years or more for the Veterans Hearing Loss Fund and the Veterans Mobility Fund. This will provide essential support and equipment for veterans with hearing loss and mobility issues resulting from their service.*
- *We are committed to fulfilling our moral obligation to Afghan Locally Employed Civilians by expediting the resettlement process for eligible family members who supported our service personnel during the Afghanistan conflict.*

- *Additionally, we will argue that the next Government should honour the commitment by the previous Government for the creation of an appropriate financial redress scheme for LGBT+ veterans who were wrongfully discharged prior to the lifting of the pre-2000 ban on homosexuality in the Armed Forces.*
- *Continue to work with the Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner and the UK Minister of State for Veterans Affairs to ensure the Armed Forces Covenant is delivered in Northern Ireland for veterans.*



“We should honour the sacrifice and commitment of our Armed Forces.”





Ulster
Unionist
Party

**BUILDING A MORE
PROSPEROUS
FUTURE FOR YOU,
YOUR FAMILY &
GENERATIONS TO
COME.**

IMMIGRATION



Controlled Immigration is important to all countries across the world. In the UK it has helped create **a skilled workforce**. Many doctors, nurses and other Health Care professionals come from other countries around the world, setting up home in Northern Ireland and **contributing to our society in a positive way**. Northern Ireland is also heavily reliant on ethnic minorities from other countries to carry out highly intensive manual jobs within the agri-food industry.

For those who wish to make Northern Ireland their home and contribute **we must do all we can to make them welcome**. We must support them as they integrate into our society through our education and health systems and absorb our values of tolerance, hard work and civic responsibility, adding value to who we are.

Those **asylum seekers** who come here fleeing persecution from places like Afghanistan, Syria, Ukraine and Hong Kong **should also be welcome** and their applications dealt with at speed and with diligence to ensure all is correct. It is especially important that families with young children or single mothers are processed swiftly.

Illegal immigration undermines our systems, creates a burden on public services and prevents genuine asylum seekers being dealt with in a timely manner.

The market in people trafficking and illegal immigration has now become big business. It is **cruel and exploitative**, and must be challenged and brought to a halt.

Our **immigration system must be open, transparent and fair**. We must target the traffickers, who put people's lives at risk for profit, as our main defence in reducing illegal immigration.

WE WILL:

- *Have a zero-tolerance policy on illegal immigration, while being responsive to genuine asylum seekers.*
- *Support government measures to target the people traffickers through cooperation with other European countries.*
- *Increase the number of staff working on asylum applications threefold to allow genuine asylum seekers to receive their application decision quicker and when granted asylum to integrate fully into UK society.*
- *Fast track asylum application for families with children, single mothers or those who have a protected professions such as doctors or pharmacists.*

Northern Ireland has moved away from the old binary labelling of Orange and Green. We are now a **multi-cultural society** with a variety of ethnic minorities who call this place home while they continue to **celebrate their culture** through music, dance, the written word, religion and food. It has created a diversity in Northern Ireland that is **enriching, welcoming and positive**.

There are a minority of people in Northern Ireland that feel threatened by multi-cultural diversity and are intimidating those from differing ethnic backgrounds resulting in **some newcomers feeling isolated and scared**. This is totally unacceptable. The Ulster Unionist Party will work across civic society and support the police to end this unacceptable behaviour.



“Immigration has created a diversity in Northern Ireland that is enriching, welcoming and positive.”



WE WILL:

- *Continue to support a Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland.*
- *Promote a multi-cultural society that ensures ethnic minorities have the opportunity to integrate throughout Northern Ireland.*
- *Ensure funding for ethnic minority and religious groups, including cultural events, is fair and proportionate building on the Belfast Mela celebrations as best practice.*
- *Support the Police Service of Northern Ireland and civic society to address and end race related intimidation and discrimination.*
- *Support people from minority ethnic backgrounds who fully contribute to our society, through education, the economy, health services, community activities, sports and the arts.*

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



In the modern era, few technological advancements have captured the imagination quite like **Artificial Intelligence (A.I.)**. At its core, A.I. refers to the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, particularly computer systems. It encompasses a wide array of capabilities, including learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, and language understanding. As we stand on the **cusp of a new age of innovation**, the Ulster Unionist Party recognises the transformative potential of A.I. and is committed to **harnessing its power for the betterment of Northern Ireland**.

A.I. technologies are already permeating various aspects of our lives, from virtual assistants on our smartphones to sophisticated algorithms powering recommendation systems on streaming platforms. Machine learning, a subset of A.I., enables systems to improve their task performance through experience. Deep learning, another subset, employs neural networks with many layers to analyse and process complex data. **These technologies hold immense promise across numerous sectors, including healthcare, transportation, finance, education and beyond.**

The **benefits of A.I. are diverse and far-reaching**. Enhanced efficiency and productivity are perhaps the most immediate advantages, as A.I. systems can automate repetitive tasks, **freeing up human resources** for more creative and strategic endeavours. A.I. also has the **potential to revolutionise healthcare**, facilitating early disease detection, personalised treatment plans and drug discovery.

In agriculture, A.I. applications can optimise crop yields and mitigate environmental impact through **precision farming techniques**. Furthermore, A.I. can bolster **cybersecurity** efforts, detect fraudulent activities, and improve overall **safety** across various digital networks.

While the promise of A.I. is undeniable, it is crucial to acknowledge and **mitigate potential risks**. Concerns regarding **job displacement** loom large, as automation could render certain professions obsolete, exacerbating **socioeconomic inequalities**.

Ethical considerations surrounding data privacy, algorithmic bias, and autonomous decision-making also demand **careful scrutiny**. Additionally, there are existential risks associated with the development of superintelligent A.I. systems, necessitating robust governance frameworks to ensure alignment with human values and objectives.

As supporters of progress and innovation, the Ulster Unionist Party is committed to fostering an ecosystem that encourages the **responsible development and deployment of A.I. technologies**.



WE COMMIT TO:

- *Investment in Research and Development:* We will advocate for increased public and private investment in A.I. research and development, fostering collaboration between universities, the private sector and government to drive innovation and technological advancement.
- *Skills Development and Education:* Recognising the importance of human capital in realising the potential of A.I., we will champion initiatives to upskill and reskill the workforce, ensuring that Northern Ireland remains competitive in the global digital economy.
- *Ethical and Regulatory Frameworks:* We will work in Parliament to establish robust ethical and regulatory frameworks governing the development and deployment of A.I. technologies, prioritising transparency, accountability, and fairness to mitigate potential risks and safeguard public trust.
- *Promotion of A.I. Adoption:* Through targeted incentives and support mechanisms, we will encourage businesses and organisations across Northern Ireland to embrace A.I. technologies, leveraging their transformative potential to drive economic growth and societal progress.
- *International Collaboration:* Recognising that A.I. transcends national boundaries, we will encourage international collaboration and cooperation on A.I. governance and standards, fostering a global consensus on ethical standards and best practices.



The Ulster Unionist Party envisions a future where A.I. serves as a catalyst for positive change, empowering individuals, enhancing productivity and advancing the collective welfare of Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom.

“By embracing innovation with prudence and foresight, we can harness the full potential of A.I. to build a brighter, more prosperous future for generations to come.”

MAKING NORTHERN IRELAND WORK.



**Ulster
Unionist
Party**

YOUR ULSTER UNIONIST CANDIDATES

Westminster 2024



JOHN STEWART
East Antrim



ROBIN SWANN
South Antrim



JACKSON MINFORD
North Antrim



RYAN WARREN
Belfast East



MICHAEL HENDERSON
Belfast South &
Mid Down



BEN SHARKEY
Belfast West



GLEN MILLER
East Londonderry



JANICE MONTGOMERY
Foyle



DIANA ARMSTRONG
Fermanagh &
South Tyrone



ROBBIE BUTLER
Lagan Valley



JAY BASRA
Mid Ulster



TIM COLLINS
North Down



SAM NICHOLSON
Newry & Armagh



MICHAEL O'LOAN
South Down



RICHARD SMART
Strangford



KATE EVANS
Upper Bann



MATTHEW BELL
West Tyrone

**VOTE FOR CHANGE.
VOTE ULSTER UNIONIST.**





**VOTE FOR CHANGE.
VOTE ULSTER UNIONIST.**



**Ulster
Unionist
Party**

www.uup.org

Party Headquarters

2-4 Belmont Rd, Strandtown Hall, Belfast, BT4 2AN

Tel: 028 9047 4630

Email: uup@uup.org

Printed by Cathedral Graphics, 117 Donegall St, Belfast, BT1 2JF

Published & Promoted by the Ulster Unionist Party, 2-4 Belmont Road, Strandtown Hall, Belfast BT4 2AN