

Pivotal launches new research and engagement project about Stormont reform

The independent think tank Pivotal is beginning a new research project, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, looking into attitudes and options for Stormont reform.

With an Assembly election in May 2027 and ongoing concerns about the stability of government here, this project comes at a time when deep research and understanding of different perspectives is vital to help shape the public debate on the future of Northern Ireland's political institutions.

The research will build on Pivotal's previous report, *Improving the institutions: suggested reforms to the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive*. **The central aim is to gain a detailed understanding of different people's attitudes to potential changes that might make the institutions more effective.**

Through a series of conversations and roundtable discussions, **the project will take in the thoughts and opinions of local political parties, government officials, business groups, community and voluntary sector representatives, academics, researchers, commentators and wider civic society.**

It will culminate with a half-day conference and a published report, bringing together the findings and recommending a way forward. The project is expected to take eight months with the report and conference next spring.

Ann Watt, Director of Pivotal, said: "We are delighted to be starting this new project. We're excited to build on our previous work on Stormont reform, and develop new connections and relationships across politics and civic society to gather a full range of views about how the institutions of government here operate and how they could improve.

"Reforming the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive has been high on the agenda in recent times and, with an upcoming election, it will be in the minds of many voters and politicians. We recognise the challenges of our system of government, and in this project we want to explore different views about how reforms might help address these.

"This new project is supported by the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, a UK-wide grant-making body. This is a strong endorsement of Pivotal's track record of independent research and engagement. We are grateful to JRRT for their support."

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