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NORTHERN IRELANDS LARGEST POLITICAL PARTY

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DUP NEWS**Latest News:****MASSIVE INCREASE IN SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS SECTOR WELCOMED**

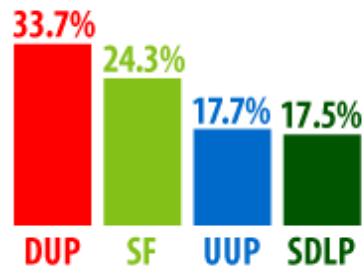
DUP Member of Parliament for Lagan Valley, Jeffrey Donaldson has welcomed a substantial package of interim funding announced by the Office of the First Minister. The funding will be in place until new financial arrangements are determined and will guarantee significant funding increases across the board. Amongst the elements announced is a 10% increase in core funding for all groups presently receiving core funding from the Office of the First Minister; £900,000 in this financial year for schemes delivered to individuals by the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund and an increase to £1.5million for the Development Grant Scheme, which represents a doubling of available funding. Funding will also be made available to improve trauma services in partnership with the Department of Health. Speaking today Jeffrey Donaldson said:



“The DUP has always regarded the needs and concerns of the victims of the violence in Northern Ireland as a top priority. For too long, the victims were sidelined and ignored by those in control of government here. The DUP is changing that. In government we have pushed the victim’s agenda to the forefront. This latest

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announcement of a substantial interim funding package, to operate whilst the new Victims Strategy is put out for consultation is designed to bring maximum benefit to those who have suffered so much as a result of the violence here.

The DUP believes in a fair deal for victims. Positive measures such as increasing core funding for all groups currently in receipt of the same from the First Minister's Office will bring real and long-lasting benefits. Similarly making almost £1million available for schemes to be delivered to individuals, who may not belong to any formalised groups, will reach those who have not thus far received the advantages of funding such as this.

Following on from the doubling of the victims sector budget announced by the DUP Finance Minister, and the creation of an independent advocate in the form of the Victims Commission, this latest announcement further underscores DUP delivery in government for the victims of Northern Ireland."

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