



# Northern Ireland

*Progress since 1998*

**10 April 1998**

After nearly two years of talks and 30 years of conflict, the **Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement** is officially signed, underpinning Northern Ireland's peace, constitutional settlement and institutions

**18 May 1998**

'**Concert for Yes**' encouraging people to vote in favour of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement took place in Belfast three days before the referendum, with musical acts U2 and Ash performing in front of about 2,000 schoolchildren. U2 frontman Bono is pictured on stage alongside Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble and SDLP leader John Hume

**21 May 1998**

Former Prime Minister **Tony Blair visits Ulster University** in Coleraine, County Londonderry, two days before the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement referendum. He made promises to the people of Northern Ireland, in a last chance attempt to win over Unionists

**22 May 1998**

The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement was endorsed through a referendum with **71.2% of people voting in favour**. It led to the creation of a series of bodies, in particular the Northern Ireland Assembly, which has full legislative and executive authority for all matters that are the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Government Departments

**3 June 1998**

Following the referendum on 10 April, the **Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland** was set up to reform the police service making it more representative of the whole community in Northern Ireland

**25 June 1998**

The **first elections** to the newly-established Northern Ireland Assembly took place

**1 July 1998**

Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble and SDLP deputy leader Seamus Mallon were **elected First and deputy First Minister** at the Northern Ireland Assembly's first meeting



**3 Sept 1998**

Former **US President Bill Clinton** delivered a keynote speech to the Northern Ireland Assembly at the Waterfront Hall in Belfast. In attendance were the former First Minister David Trimble, Deputy First Minister Seamus Mallon, former Prime Minister Tony Blair and members of the Northern Ireland Assembly

**14 Sept 1998**

The **Northern Ireland Assembly** met for the first time in Parliament Buildings at Stormont, delivering a key component of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement

**19 Nov 1998**

The Northern Ireland Act (1998) was passed by the UK Government, allowing the **devolution of power to Northern Ireland**. The Act also created the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

**9 Sept 1999**

The **Patten Report on policing** is published, with recommendations for changes to policing in Northern Ireland including community-led policing boards and 50-50 recruitment of Protestants and Catholics

**2 Dec 2000**

Legislative powers and **executive authority for the Northern Ireland Government Departments** were devolved to the Assembly from 2 December 1999

**2 Dec 2000**

Belfast's landmark **Odyssey Millennium project** opens, heralding major redevelopment of the historic Titanic Quarter area which led to increased investment, jobs and tourism through the hosting of large-scale events

**12-13 Dec 2000**

Former **US President Bill Clinton** visited Northern Ireland, delivering a keynote address at the Odyssey Arena. He appealed directly to the people of Northern Ireland, stating: "I believe in the peace you are building and that there can be no turning back"

**4 Nov 2001**

The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) changed its name to **Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)** as part of a series of reforms



**14 May 2002**

As part of her Golden Jubilee Celebrations, **HM The Queen visited Parliament Buildings** with then First Minister David Trimble MP MLA and Deputy First Minister Mark Durkan MLA which included a reception with Members of the Assembly in the Great Hall

**28 July 2005**

The IRA formally announces an end to its 36-year armed campaign and orders units to **decommission weapons** and pursue their goals through peaceful means

**11-13 Oct 2006**

Following the suspension of devolution in 2002, the **St Andrews Agreement** set out a path to full devolution of policing and justice and a stable power-sharing arrangement in Northern Ireland

**6 March 2008**

**Victoria Square Shopping and Leisure Complex** opens to the public. The commercial and leisure development represents one of the most expensive property investments in Belfast's history

**17 June 2008**

Former **US President George W. Bush** visited Lough View Integrated Primary School in Belfast to show his support for educating Protestant and Catholic children together. Integrated education is highlighted in the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement

**10 April 2008**

Belfast held the **10th Anniversary Symposium** of the signing of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, bringing together fourteen of the original negotiators at an event hosted by the US-Ireland Alliance

**5 Feb 2010**

The **Hillsborough Castle Agreement** was reached which allowed for the devolution of policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland Executive

**12 April 2010**

Policing and justice powers transferred from the Northern Ireland Office to the newly formed **Department of Justice**. With the devolution of policing and justice functions to the Northern Ireland Assembly, the NIO's role and responsibilities changed significantly. Many of its staff transferred to the newly formed Department of Justice for Northern Ireland, meaning that the NIO reduced in size from over 2,000 to 164 staff



**15 July 2010**

Derry-Londonderry is officially named the **UK's first City of Culture for 2013**. The city benefited economically and culturally from the competition, hosting events such as Radio 1's Big Weekend, the Turner Prize and numerous other initiatives which brought thousands of people to the city in 2013

**4 Aug 2010**

Television show **Game of Thrones** began its production in Belfast and across other locations in Northern Ireland. Over the next eight seasons of the show, the fantasy drama catapults Northern Ireland to the mainstream and boosts tourism and investment thanks to partnerships with HBO, Northern Ireland Screen and Tourism Ireland. Northern Ireland is now considered today a major hub for film and television production

**17 May 2011**

Queen Elizabeth II became the **first British Monarch in 100 years to visit Ireland**, marking a significant turning point in Anglo-Irish relations as she met with former President of Ireland Mary McAleese and addressed a state dinner in Irish

**6 Nov 2011**

Belfast hosted the **MTV European Music Awards** at the Odyssey Arena and other venues across the city

**31 March 2012**

Visitor attraction **Titanic Belfast** opens on the site of the former Harland & Wolff shipyard where the RMS Titanic was built. It has become one of Northern Ireland's leading tourist attractions

**27 June 2012**

During a visit to mark **Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee**, Queen Elizabeth II and Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness shook hands for the first time at the Lyric Theatre in Belfast

**17 June 2013**

**US President Barack Obama** visited Northern Ireland to attend the G8 summit in County Fermanagh with other world leaders. Addressing an audience at the Waterfront Hall in Belfast ahead of the summit, he said the road to a lasting peace in Northern Ireland was "as urgent now as it has ever been"



**9 May 2014**

Northern Ireland hosted the first stages of the **97th Giro d'Italia**, one of cycling's Grand Tours

**23 Dec 2014**

The **Stormont House Agreement** was published, with the aim of resolving identity issues, welfare reform and making government finance in Northern Ireland more sustainable

**17 Nov 2015**

The **Fresh Start Agreement** set out the Executive's commitment to tackling paramilitary activity and associated criminality. It provided a roadmap for the implementation of many aspects of the Stormont House Agreement

**1 Feb 2017**

Virginia McVea is appointed as the **first female Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland**, a role which oversees public participation and confidence in the electoral process in Northern Ireland

**18 June 2018**

Northern Ireland joins the rest of the UK in allowing electors to **apply online to join the electoral register**

**18-21 July 2019**

Royal Portrush Golf Club played host to the **2019 Open Championship**. The venue is set to host the Championship again from July 17-20, 2025

**9 Jan 2020**

The **New Decade, New Approach Agreement** allows for the restoration of the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly after three years

**10 Dec 2020**

The UK Government provides a **New Deal for Northern Ireland** - a £400m package. The substantial financial package is aimed at supporting businesses, trade and investment following the UK's exit from the European Union

**12 March 2021**

2021 marked **100 years since the creation of Northern Ireland**, and the launch of the NIO's Our Story in the Making: NI Beyond 100 Centenary campaign showcasing Northern Ireland as an attractive place to live, visit and do business

**21 March 2021**

The **population of Northern Ireland** reaches 1.9m, up from 1.7m in 2001

**27 Oct 2021**

First round of the £4.8 billion **Levelling Up Fund** from the UK Government for Northern Ireland is received, contributing to the levelling up agenda by investing in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centre and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets

**3 Nov 2021**

Announcement of £12m investment from the **Community Renewal Fund**, going directly to businesses, councils and the voluntary sector in Northern Ireland

**17 Dec 2021**

Northern Ireland's **first City Deal is signed**, unlocking £1 billion of transformative co-investment for the Belfast region. The financial commitment will generate up to 20,000 jobs as it is delivered over the next 10 - 15 years

**6 July 2022**

£1.9m was announced in funding towards the **Integrated Education Fund (IEF)** and the **Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)** to allow a greater number of children from different community backgrounds to be educated together

**10 April 2023**

25 years on from the signing of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, **Northern Ireland has made remarkable progress** delivering greater prosperity and a safer and more inclusive society