

Alliance

The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland

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“ P R E S S R E L E A S E ”

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Alderdice worried about priorities

Following a meeting this morning with Malcolm Moss to discuss the situation in the health service and in particular the proposed 3% cuts per year over the next 3 years, Alliance Leader, Dr John Alderdice said:

It is clear that part of the background to these cuts, and the Minister did honestly admit that they were cuts, is pressure from the Treasury in London. However, it is also clear that whilst in Scotland, decisions on the distribution of block funding have protected health care, in Northern Ireland the decision was made to distribute funds to the Department of Economic Development instead.

I am a strong supporter of economic development but I am not at all sure that Northern Ireland people will be convinced that taking money from home help services and surgery and giving it as financial bonuses for foreign companies is necessarily the best type of prioritising.

Clearly, even aside from a funding question there are major strategic issues under debate, so we have asked for a further and longer meeting to take these discussions on and the Minister has agreed."

The meeting was also attended by - Dr Joe Hendron SDLP, Mr Jim Clarke UUP, UUP, Rev William McCrea DUP