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Devolution 'barely functioning' in Northern Ireland

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Tom Griffin (London, [The Green Ribbon](#) [1]): Divisions in the Northern Ireland Executive resurfaced at the weekend, when the [Irish News](#) [2] reported that a meeting due to take place on Thursday is in doubt:

If the one scheduled for July 24 does not take place an entire quarter of the year will have passed between the last meeting on June 19 and next possible date.

It will also mean that First Minister Peter Robinson has only presided over one executive meeting since taking office.

There are an estimated 40 pieces of government business trapped in limbo as papers and proposals await executive approval.

This morning's [Irish Times](#) [3] highlights the continuing stand-off between the Executive's two leading parties:

The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) accused Sinn Féin of frustrating the work of the ministerial Executive after disagreements over issues like abolishing selection for post-primary education and devolving policing and justice powers to the Assembly.

However, Sinn Féin said it was prepared to meet unionists at any time to resolve outstanding matters. DUP Assembly member Peter Weir claimed "narrow party-political reasons" were to blame for delays in holding Executive meetings.

It all makes for a stark contrast with the [progress of devolution](#) [3] in Scotland and Wales.

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[2] http://www.irishnews.com/articles/540/5860/2008/7/19/593127_351799637130Stormontd.html

[3] <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2008/0721/1216565492650.html>