

First Minister off to Downing Street today



First Minister Nicola Sturgeon will take the fight to stop the Trade Union Bill coming into force in Scotland to Downing Street today.

In the meeting with Prime Minister David Cameron the First Minister will set out the clear opposition for the bill north of the border.

The First Minister will also make clear that Scotland must not lose out from changes to the way the Scottish budget is calculated after new tax and spend powers are devolved.

The discussion will also include security matters and how the two governments can work together to help combat the threat posed by international terrorism.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: "There is clear opposition across Scottish society and across the Scottish Parliament to this damaging piece of legislation.

"The number of days lost to strike action have been reduced in Scotland by 84 per cent through partnership working, not by slapping sanctions on workers.

"To impose this bill on Scotland would be an unacceptable step and I will make that clear to the Prime Minister."

Commenting on the fiscal framework for the Scotland Bill the First Minister said:

"We need a fair deal for both Governments – no more, no less.

“These considerations are critical – if the financial framework accompanying the new powers is wrong, Scotland could be worse off by hundreds of millions of pounds a year.

”The Smith Commission was clear that the Barnett Formula must continue unaltered, and that the Scottish or UK Governments should be no better or worse off simply as a result of the transfer of powers – before any policy decisions are taken.

“It is absolutely crucial that future Scottish Governments can use the new tax and spending powers, to create a fairer society and grow the economy, without losing out.

“Today is not about agreeing a final deal but I hope we can make significant progress in agreeing that the deal must be a fair one.

“The meeting will also be an important opportunity for the PM and I to discuss how our governments can work ever more closely together to help combat the threat posed by international terrorism”