



Department for
**Social
Development**

www.dsdni.gov.uk

Dr Kevin Pelan
Clerk, Committee for Social Development
Room 412
Parliament Buildings
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

Level 4, Lighthouse Building
1 Cromac Place
Gasworks Business Park
Ormeau Road
Belfast BT7 2JB
Telephone: (028) 90829510 Network: 38510
Facsimile: (028) 90 829539
Email: social.policy@dsdni.gov.uk

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Dear Kevin

REVIEW OF GAMBLING LEGISLATION

Thank you for your correspondence dated 24th January 2012 enquiring about the current position on the gambling review.

In October 11, officials briefed the Committee on the outcome of the earlier consultation on possible reforms of the gambling law. At that time officials indicated that the law is becoming increasingly out of date and has not kept pace with industry and technological changes. Later, in response to a question in the Assembly the Minister said he was currently giving detailed consideration to the many complex issues raised in the consultation and would make an announcement on the way forward for the gambling review in due course.

The Minister recently met with several industry representatives and the Irish Minister for Justice to discuss the gambling review. He plans to meet with the Chief Constable later this month to discuss regulation and enforcement issues. It remains his intention to make an announcement on the way forward for the gambling review in due course.

You also asked for the Department's comments on the economic appraisals submitted to the Committee by the Turf Guardians Association and 'Legalise Poker in NI'. Our economists have reviewed the material and commented as follows:

- 'Turf Guardians Association' – negative impacts are estimated to be large. While there will be negative impacts the gross basis of the PwC analysis exaggerates their extent.
- 'Legalise Poker in NI' – this is a short paper with limited analytical detail. While there may well be economic benefits they will be small scale.

The Department would wish to emphasise the importance of assessing the social, health and other impacts of any proposed changes to the gambling law. This is particularly important in light of the results of the Gambling Prevalence Survey 2010 which identified over one in 50 adults in Northern Ireland as having a gambling problem.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Liam Quinn".

Liam Quinn
Head of Social Policy Unit