



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 1 DECEMBER 2020

Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Paul Givan MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Linda Dillon MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Doug Beattie MLA
Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA
Ms Jemma Dolan MLA
Mr Gordon Dunne MLA
Mr Paul Frew MLA
Ms Emma Rogan MLA
Ms Rachel Woods MLA

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darrah (Assembly Clerk)
Miss Leanne Johnston (Assistant Clerk)
Mrs Allison Mealey (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 1.02 p.m. in closed session.

1. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill – Proposed Amendments for Further Consideration Stage – Advice from the Assembly Bill Clerk

Ms Stephanie Mallon, Assembly Bill Clerk, joined the meeting to provide advice on the Department of Justice's revised amendments for Further Consideration Stage of the Bill.

Mr Dunne joined the meeting at 1.07 p.m.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Mallon for her advice and she left the meeting.

The meeting moved into public session at 1.23 p.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the oral evidence session should be reported by Hansard.

2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

3. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill – Proposed Departmental Amendments for Further Consideration Stage

The following officials joined the meeting at 1.23 p.m. via video conferencing:

Dr Veronica Holland, Head of Violence Against the Person Branch, Department of Justice
Steven Martin, Deputy Director, Enabling Access to Justice, Department of Justice
John Bradley, Head of Branch, Civil Legal Aid Reform, Department of Justice

The officials provided clarification on a range of issues in relation to the Department's revised amendments and in particular the civil legal aid amendments.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 2.39 p.m. to enable Members to attend justice oral questions in the Assembly Chamber.

The meeting recommenced at 3.34 p.m.

Present: Mr Paul Givan MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Linda Dillon MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Doug Beattie MLA
Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA
Mr Paul Frew MLA
Ms Emma Rogan MLA
Ms Rachel Woods MLA

4. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill – Proposed Departmental Amendments for Further Consideration Stage (continued)

The following officials re-joined the meeting at 3.34 p.m. via video conferencing:

Dr Veronica Holland, Head of Violence Against the Person Branch, Department of Justice
John Bradley, Head of Branch, Civil Legal Aid Reform, Department of Justice
Steven Martin, Deputy Director, Enabling Access to Justice, Department of Justice

The question and answer session on the Department's revised amendments for Further Consideration Stage continued.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content to support the Department of Justice's proposed amendments in relation to Information-sharing with schools etc; Report on the operation of Part 1 of the Act; Independent Oversight of Part 1 of the Act; Training within relevant bodies; Protective Measures for Victims of Abuse; Guidance on Data Collection; to bring Clause 31 into operation the day after Royal Assent and the Long Title and Short Title of the Bill.

The Committee agreed to move into closed session at 3.52 p.m. to receive further advice from the Assembly Bill Clerk.

5. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill – Proposed Amendments for Further Consideration Stage – Advice from the Assembly Bill Clerk

Ms Dolan re-joined the meeting at 4.00 p.m.

Ms Stephanie Mallon, Assembly Bill Clerk, re-joined the meeting to provide advice on potential amendments for Further Consideration Stage of the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Mallon for her advice.

The meeting moved into public session at 4.32 p.m.

6. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill – Proposed Amendments for Further Consideration Stage

The Committee considered potential amendments relating to the commencement of Clause 27 of the Bill as it currently stands and the Department's proposed amendment for a new Clause 27.

The question was put that the Committee would bring forward an amendment at Further Consideration Stage to provide for Clause 27 as made at Consideration Stage to commence at the same time as Chapters 1 and 2 of the Bill.

The Committee divided: Ayes 5; Noes 3

AYES

Mr Doug Beattie
Ms Sinéad Bradley
Mr Paul Frew
Mr Paul Givan (Chairperson)
Ms Rachel Woods

NOES

Ms Linda Dillon (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Jemma Dolan
Ms Emma Rogan

Agreed: The Committee agreed to bring forward the amendment as proposed.

The question was put that the Committee would bring forward an amendment at Further Consideration Stage to provide for the new Clause 27, as provided for in the amendment intended to be tabled by the Department, to commence at the same time as Chapters 1 and 2 of the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to bring forward the amendment as proposed.

7. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 3 December 2020 at 2.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.34 p.m.

Mr Paul Givan MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Justice