

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE
MINISTER



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16 February 2022

Dear Christine

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE 2022-25 DRAFT BUDGET (NICTS)

Thank you for your letter of 4 February 2022 asking the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) to provide further information following the appearance by officials before the Committee on 3 February 2022.

In terms of the NICTS Estate, I can confirm there are ten listed buildings located at various locations throughout Northern Ireland.

The Department are leading the introduction of a pilot Domestic Violence Court at Laganside Magistrates' Court focusing on cases where the lead offence involves physical violence and there is a not guilty plea. The new arrangements will involve domestic violence cases for the Belfast policing area listed in a specific court sitting, heard on assigned days by the same Judge. Work is ongoing with the judiciary and criminal justice partners around piloting the arrangements.

This work includes how to improve the file quality processes, including earlier sharing of information (including body worn video footage). It is intended this approach will better support proceeding with prosecutions, potentially in the absence of a victim giving evidence. It is hoped to introduce the pilot by June 2022, subject to establishing the supporting processes and securing the necessary budget. The estimated cost is in the region of £50,000 per year, primarily in relation to judicial cover.

I would be grateful if you could bring this update to the attention of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

CLAIRE MCCORMICK DALO