



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Justice

Minutes of Proceedings

7 March 2022

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Sinéad Ennis MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Jemma Dolan MLA
Ms Rachel Woods MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA
Mr Peter Weir MLA

Apologies: Mr Doug Beattie MLA
Ms Emma Rogan MLA
Mr Robin Newton MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darrah (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Mr Stephen Corr (Clerical Supervisor)



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In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

The meeting commenced at 9:59 a.m. in closed session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that agenda item 2 would be held in closed session.

1. Apologies

As above.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that, under Standing Order 115(6), Emma Rogan MLA had delegated authority to the Deputy Chairperson, Sinéad Ennis MLA, to vote on her behalf.

2. Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill – Consideration of correspondence from Department of Justice on the Committee amendments

The Chairperson informed Members that he had met with the Attorney General for Northern Ireland earlier to discuss some concerns she had raised about the Committee amendments to the abuse of trust provision in the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill and she had offered to attend the meeting on an informal basis to discuss them if Members would find that helpful.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Attorney General should attend to discuss her concerns.



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The Attorney General for Northern Ireland, Dame Brenda King, joined the meeting and a discussion took place on her concerns regarding the Committee amendments, her role in relation to Assembly Bills and the process if she was of the view that there was an issue with the competence of any Bill.

Sinéad Ennis MLA joined the meeting at 10:17 a.m.

The Chairperson thanked the Attorney General for her attendance and advice to the Committee.

The Committee discussed its proposed amendments to the abuse of trust provision.

The Committee moved into open session at 10:48 a.m.

3. Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill – Consideration of correspondence from Department of Justice on Committee amendments

The Committee considered a response from the Department of Justice to its request for clarification of the position of the Minister of Justice regarding the abuse of trust amendments and her alternative amendment to provide for a review mechanism.

The Committee noted advice from the Assembly Bill Clerk on the position regarding the Committee amendment to provide for a review mechanism.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that amendments 14 to 18 on the Marshalled List of Amendments for the Further Consideration Stage of the Bill which extended the abuse of trust provision to include tuition and youth activities in an individual or a group setting should not be moved.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that amendment 20 on the Marshalled List of Amendments for the Further Consideration Stage of the Bill which provided for a



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review mechanism placing an obligation on the Department of Justice to review annually Article 29A (1) to 2(B) of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 as to inform the Department on whether the power in Article 29A (4) of that Order should be exercised should be moved.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to advise the Minister of Justice of its decisions and to seek her commitment to instruct officials to commence engagement with the sectors involved in tuition and youth activities and the wider children's sector to explore whether there is evidence of a risk of harm that would warrant a legislative intervention before the end of the mandate.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Doug Beattie MLA had indicated that he was content to support the majority decision of the Committee reached at today's meeting.

4. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 10 March 2022 at 2:00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Mervyn Storey MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Justice

22 March 2022