



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

Justice Committee
Room 242
Parliament Buildings
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

By email to: Christine.Darrah@niassembly.gov.uk
committalreformbill@niassembly.gov.uk

4 December 2020

Dear Christine,

Re: Criminal Justice (Committal Reform) Bill

Thank you for your letter inviting the Commission to respond to the Committee's consideration of the Criminal Justice (Committal Reform) Bill.

The Commission recognises the issue of delay across the criminal justice system and the impact that this has on all those affected by the process, including defendants and those persons who are victims or witnesses of crime. I recognise that the proposed reform of the Committal process is intended to speed up the process in Crown Court trials. I also note the call for such reform within earlier Criminal Justice Inspectorate reports, the reports of the Independent Reporting Commission and the Gillen Review of the law and procedures in cases of serious sexual offences.

The Commission would recommend that the Committee seek further information from the Department of Justice in respect of their analysis of the Bill for human rights compliance, both in respect of the European Convention on Human Rights and international human rights law. The Explanatory Memorandum does not disclose any analysis, and only refers to the ECHR and as a matter of good

practice the Commission thinks that the full analysis should always be provided to the Committee.

The Commission has no fundamental concerns on the face of the Bill; however, if there is anything specific the Committee would like the Commission to address, please do not hesitate to contact us for further advice.

Yours sincerely,

Les Allamby
Chief Commissioner