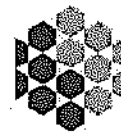


**PERMANENT SECRETARY**  
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Our Ref: SSUB-0003-2020

2 June 2020

Dear Christine

**DOMESTIC ABUSE AND FAMILY PROCEEDINGS BILL**

Thank you for your letter dated 7 May 2020 inviting my views and comments on the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill.

I confirm that I have reviewed the Bill in terms of the areas specified. The Department particularly welcomes the introduction of coercive control as an offence which will address the gap in the existing legislation and bring Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK and the Republic of Ireland. The Bill provides a comprehensive definition of coercive control and the punitive measures are reflective of the seriousness of domestic abuse, both physical and emotional, and the potential serious and long term effects on victims. In particular, the Bill enhances protection for children categorised as 'vulnerable' pursuant to The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 which includes children affected by domestic violence.

Yours sincerely

**DEREK BAKER**