

Extract of Email from 16 September 2020 and enclosed table providing updated information provided by Department for the Economy

From: Logan, Tim

Sent: 16 September 2020 16:39

To: +Comm Justice Public Email <committee.justice@niassembly.gov.uk>; Darrah, Christine < >

Cc: Scullion, Fiona, Rodgers, Shauna Morrow, Lesley-Ann

Subject: Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill - Consideration of other issues not currently included in the Bill

See attached an updated table of other issues not currently included in the DA Bill.

Officials have added in a paragraph from DfE to the table (shown in red for ease).

As you know, the earlier version sent to the Committee noted that input from DfE was outstanding and we would issue once received.

Issue/Proposal	Department of Justice comments/views
<p>Guidelines to Employers and Recognising Domestic Violence as a Workplace Issue</p> <p>A number of organisations have highlighted the need to recognise domestic violence as having an impact throughout society including in work and have recommended the provision of special leave.</p> <p>The Women’s Policy Group notes that some employers are proactive at working with unions to ensure that victims of violence and abuse are supported in work, it believes that additional measures are now necessary and notes that other parts of the UK have introduced legislation which places a duty on Government and Local Government to develop and implement strategies and actions plans.</p> <p>It recommends the development of an act similar to the Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and place a strategic public duty on the Executive to prepare, publish and review a strategy which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Places a duty on public sector bodies to prepare and implement local strategies; (b) Requires the development of a National Training Framework; 	<p>The Minister for the Economy has asked officials to give consideration to the issue of paid leave for victims of domestic abuse alongside a range of other employment related issues as part of a longer term vision for employment relations in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The seven year Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy was published jointly by the Department of Justice and the Department of Health in 2016. The Strategy’s annual action plans include actions for other Executive Departments including the Department for Education and the Department for Communities. Accordingly, it is not considered that legislation is required to place a duty on the Executive to produce a strategy.</p> <p><i>Employer Guidance on how to develop a Workplace Policy on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse was published under the Strategy in Nov 2018. Further consideration will be given to how best to work collaboratively with interested parties (including the NI Civil Service) to further promote this.</i></p>

(c) Places a duty to publish National indicators that may be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Act;

(d) Gives the power to issue statutory guidance including in relation to workplace policies to promote the well-being of employees of relevant authorities who may be affected by gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence; training for the members and staff of a relevant authority; the sharing of information between relevant authorities or by a relevant authority with another person; co-operation between relevant authorities or between a relevant authority and other persons.

This recommendation is supported by other groups including the Women's Regional Consortium.