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Our ref: GM-1274-2016

25th October 2016

Dear Kevin,

Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill – Request for Information regarding Sports Clubs

Thank you for your letter dated 14 October seeking clarification on a number of questions relating to sporting clubs.

The Registration of Clubs (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (the Order) provides an easement for sporting clubs in relation to the general rule that non-members are only allowed in registered clubs premises in the company of a club member. This easement allows a person (a non-member) who pays a fee to a sporting club in respect of any day to use such facilities as determined by the management committee or governing body of the club. The most obvious example of this practice is a golf club which, on the payment of green fees, permits people to use the golf course along with the locker room and bar facilities.

The Order also permits young people under 18 years of age to remain in the bar area of a sporting club until 10.00pm rather than 9.00pm (9.30pm when consuming a meal) as is the case in other registered clubs.

Criteria used to classify premises as a sporting club

Whether or not a club is a sporting club is determined by whether or not it comes within the definition provided in Article 2(2) the Order. That is, it qualifies for rate relief under Article 31 of the Rates (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 because it occupies an hereditament which is used solely or mainly for the purposes of physical recreation. Therefore the Department or police are not involved in the determination of a club as a sporting club.

Number of sporting clubs

The courts grant certificates of registration to registered clubs. They do not maintain records in a form that distinguishes sporting clubs from other registered clubs.



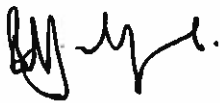
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Distinguishing sports clubs from other registered clubs

The Department did not carry out an exercise to distinguish between sporting clubs and other registered clubs when taking forward amendments in the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland Act) 2011 in relation to the presence of young people in the bar area of sporting club premises.

I hope the Committee finds this information helpful.

Yours sincerely



Billy Crawford
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer
Minister and Permanent Secretary's Office





**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

Room 430
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14 October 2016

Our Ref: CC/002/2016/SK

Mr Billy Crawford
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Department for Communities
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Dear Billy

Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill – Request for Information regarding Sports Clubs

A sporting club is defined in the 1996 Clubs Order guide as:

“as those “occupying a hereditament to which Article 31 of the Rates (Northern Ireland) 1977 applies (rates relief) being a hereditament which is used solely or mainly for the purposes of physical recreation.

The phrase “solely or mainly” is particularly important here. It means that clubs with a room set aside for darts or snooker or which have football teams cannot necessarily regard themselves as sporting clubs. Many clubs indulge in sporting activities as a side-line or even support particular sporting teams, but as they do not exist solely or mainly to actively participate in one or more physical recreations, they are unlikely to be regarded as sporting clubs for the purposes of the Order.”

I would like clarification on what criteria is used to classify a premises as a 'sports club' and how this is actually determined e.g. do officials visit premises

and inspect facilities, ascertain what sports activities they provide, are the PSNI involved in the decision?

Also, could you advise how many sports clubs there are currently registered?

Officials will be aware that the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 amended the Registration of Clubs Order, changing curfew for under 18s in the bar area of registered clubs from 9pm to 10pm. In the course of this process did the Department carry out an exercise to distinguish between “sports clubs” in the strictest sense rather than clubs with “sport” or “football” etc., in the name of the premises (but which didn’t actually provide substantive sporting activities)?

Yours sincerely

Kevin Pelan

Kevin Pelan
Clerk to the Committee