



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Justice

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 11 September 2025

Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present:

Joanne Bunting MLA (Chairperson)

Deirdre Hargey MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Stephen Dunne MLA

Ciara Ferguson MLA

Patsy McGlone MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Danny Baker MLA

Doug Beattie MLA

Connie Egan MLA

Apologies:

Maurice Bradley MLA

In Attendance: Kathy O’Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)
Thomas McKillop (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Gareth Black (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Stephen Corr (Clerical Supervisor)
Aaron Pakenham (Clerical Officer)

Agreed: That the meeting should begin in closed session for a briefing from the Examiner of Statutory Rules regarding the Delegated Powers for proposed Departmental amendments to the Justice Bill.

The meeting commenced at 2.02pm in closed session.

The Chairperson welcomed Patsy McGlone MLA to membership of the Committee and expressed thanks to Justin McNulty MLA for his contribution to the work of the Committee.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Justice Bill — Delegated Powers for Proposed Departmental Amendments – Examiner of Statutory Rules oral briefing

Angela Kelly, the Examiner of Statutory Rules and Catriona Doherty, a Legal Adviser with Assembly’s Legal Services Office, joined the meeting at 2.04pm.

The officials provided legal analysis on delegated powers for a number of the Department of Justice’s proposed amendments to the Justice Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question-and-answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials and they left the meeting at 2.35pm.

Agreed: To request information on the rationale for changing the Assembly control for amendments to the list of non-filterable offences from affirmative to negative resolution, including examples of when such changes may be required to be made urgently.

The meeting moved into public session at 2.36pm.

Agreed: That the oral evidence session with the Department of Justice on the Crime and Policing Bill Second Legislative Consent Memorandum will be recorded by Hansard.

Joanne Bunting declared an interest in relation to an immediate family member who works in the legal profession.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 3 July 2025.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 – Department of Justice – SR 2025/121 The Compensation Orders (Disqualified Directors) Proceedings (No. 2) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2025

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Justice advising that it made Statutory Rule 2025/121 - the Compensation Orders (Disqualified Directors) Proceedings (No. 2) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2025) to replace and revokes SR 2025/113 in which an error had been identified subsequent to being laid. The Committee considered SR 2025/121 at the meeting on 3 July 2025 and agreed it had no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report.

4.2 – Department of Justice – Response regarding Improving Health within Criminal Justice - Strategy and Action Plan Progress report; and

4.3 – Department of Health - Response regarding improving Health within Criminal Justice - Strategy and Action Plan Progress report

The Committee noted responses from the Department of Justice and the Department of Health to its request for clarification on a number of matters regarding the Improving Health within the Criminal Justice - Strategy and Action Plan Progress Report.

Agreed: To request more detailed information on progress of Right Care, Right Person model, including prioritisation of and timescales for the workstreams, and when implementation is expected to begin.

4.4 – Department of Justice – Response regarding RalSe’s mental Health courts paper; and

4.6 – Minister of Health – Response regarding RalSe’s mental health courts paper

The Committee noted responses from the Department of Justice and the Minister of Health to its requests for information on what work, both within the department and cross-departmentally, was being prioritised on mental health and the criminal justice system, as well as a response to the Assembly’s Research and Information Service’s paper providing an overview on Mental Health Courts.

Agreed: That the Committee should write to the Department of Justice and the Department of Health seeking an update on:

- what specific work is being done to progress Mental Health Courts;
- the rollout of multi-agency triage teams (MATT);
- an explanation for the delay in rollout;
- the costs of rolling out the scheme; and
- to request an assurance that MATTs will not be discontinued.

Patsy McGlone left the meeting at 2:44pm.

4.5 - Police Service of Northern Ireland – Response regarding mental health courts and Right Care, Right Person

The Committee noted a response from the PSNI to its request for an update on the work of the multiagency Silver operational group that members were made aware of during their concurrent meeting with the Health Committee on Right Care, Right Person.

Agreed: To request more detailed information on progress of Right Care, Right Person model, including prioritisation of and timescales for the workstreams, and when implementation is expected to begin.

4.7 - Lady Chief Justice's Office – Consultation on 'Media Access to Family Courts' Pilot

The Chairperson informed members that the Office of the Lady Chief Justice had granted an extension for the Committee's return to the consultation on media access for family courts pilot, and advised that it will be necessary for the Committee to agree its response at next week's meeting.

Members concurred with the Chairperson's remarks that transparency would assist with understanding of processes and how decisions are made in family courts, recognising that it is important that transparency is balanced with the right to privacy of those involved in cases.

The Chairperson requested that Members provide the Committee staff with any other comments they wish to include in the response by close of business on Monday 15 September to enable a draft to be prepared for consideration at next week's meeting.

4.8 – Assembly and Executive Review Committee – Review of Assembly Committee Engagement of Cross-Cutting Executive Strategies

The Chairperson also informed members that no additional comments have yet been received in relation to the AERC's cross-cutting scrutiny inquiry and requested that members forward comments to the Committee office by close of play on Monday 15 September to enable a response to be prepared for consideration at the next meeting.

5. Crime and Policing Bill — Second Legislative Consent Memorandum — Department of Justice oral evidence

The following Department of Justice officials joined the meeting at 2:50pm:

Andrew Dawson, *Director of Criminal Justice Policy and Legislation*

Lisa Boal, *Head of PACE, Policing Policy and Strategy Division*

Naomi Magowan, *Policy Official, Policing Policy and Strategy Division*

Colleen Cartwright, *Policy Official, Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Unit*

Jane Maguire, *Head of Civil and Family Courts Branch*

Susanne Corr, *Policy Official, Criminal Policy Branch*

Emma Crozier, *Head of Violence Against the Person Branch*

Patsy McGlone returned to the meeting at 2:53pm.

The officials provided an overview of further provisions in the Crime and Policing Bill that the Department believes will require legislative consent.

The oral evidence was followed by a question-and-answer session with officials.

The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

Dierdre Hargey highlighted a concern that Codes of Practice in relation to remotely stored electronic data (RSED) will not be available, even in draft form, before the LCM is expected to be agreed.

During the session, the officials agreed to provide further information on number of issues, including:

- An overview of the current legislation in relation to child abduction, how child abduction is managed when it involves movement across UK jurisdictions and what changes the provisions of the Bill will make.
- An update on the development of Codes of Practice for RSED when work on these begin.
- Details of any assessments undertaken by the Department of Health about the impact that the removal of the supervision exemption from the definition of regulated activity may have, including the estimated numbers affected and the potential implications for the community and voluntary sector.
- An explanation of how the age verification process for the purchase of knives will work for online purchases; how the threshold of six was determined for reportable sales of bladed articles; and clarification of the different definitions of a knife within the provisions and how these distinguish from each other.

The officials also agreed to keep the Committee updated as work to develop the non-statutory guidance in relation to the measures on Child Criminal Exploitation progresses.

Agreed: To seek the Committee for Health's view on the provisions to be extended in a second LCM that fall within the remit of the Department of Health.

The Chairperson thanked the officials and they left the meeting at 3:37pm

6. Justice Bill — written papers

6.1. Department of Justice written paper – Consultation on proposals to criminalise sexually explicit deepfake images; and

6.2. Department of Justice – Response regarding the Justice Bill proposed deepfake amendments

The Committee noted an update from the Department of Justice on a consultation it is currently running on its proposals to criminalise sexually explicit deepfake images and a response to the Committee's request for further following oral evidence from Departmental officials on 26 June 2025.

Agreed: To consider the amendment further once the Department's consultation has concluded.

6.3. Department of Justice – Response regarding AccessNI Filtering amendments

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Justice to the scrutiny points raised in the Assembly Research and Information Service's paper on the proposed AccessNI filtering amendment to the Justice Bill.

6.4 Department of Justice - Response regarding the Justice Bill proposed restorative justice amendments

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Justice to questions members raised in relation to the proposed restorative justice amendment to the Justice Bill.

6.5 Department of Justice - Response regarding reasonable chastisement/equal protection

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Justice to further information sought by members in relation to reasonable chastisement / equal protection.

The Committee also noted correspondence from the Department requesting information on what questions or issues Members may wish to explore during a joint oral evidence session on this issue.

Agreed: To consider further at the Committees upcoming strategic planning event and following the NSPCC reception on Equal Protection for Children in NI on 22 September 2025.

6.6 Department of Justice - Response regarding children and young people's understanding of diversionary disposals

The Committee noted a response from the Department for Justice to its request for further information in relation to children and young people's understanding of diversionary disposals and of the wider custody and questioning processes and procedures.

6.7 Department of Justice - Response regarding the Justice Bill – Photographs as Biometric Data

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Justice to several questions that members had raised in relation to the potential for photographs to be processed in such a way that they should be considered biometric data.

Some members expressed that they remained concerned that photos are not included as biometric data and will continue to consider the issue.

6.8 Police Service of Northern Ireland – Response regarding the Justice Bill - Photographs as Biometric Data

The Committee noted a response from the PSNI to information sought by the Committee in relation to the potential for photographs to be processed in such a way that they should be considered biometric data.

Agreed: To schedule a further oral evidence session with the PSNI towards the end of the evidence gathering on the Bill.

6.9 Minister of Health - Response regarding unregulated bail placements

The Committee noted a response from the Minister of Health updating on the number of children and young people placed in unregulated settings in the context of bail placements.

Ciara Ferguson stressed that, while the numbers provided in the response are low, no child or young person should be placed in an unregulated setting.

6.10 NICCY - Advice to Government: Justice Bill – Amendments

The Committee noted a paper from the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People providing written evidence on the Department of Justice's current proposed amendments to the Justice Bill.

6.11 Northern Ireland Alternatives and Community Restorative Justice Ireland – Joint written response to the Justice Committee

The Committee noted a joint written evidence paper on the Justice Bill by Northern Ireland Alternatives and Community Restorative Justice Ireland.

The Chairperson also informed members of an email from these two organisations expressing their willingness to give joint oral evidence to the Committee on the Justice Bill.

Agreed: To invite Northern Ireland Alternatives and Community Restorative Justice Ireland to give joint oral evidence on the Justice Bill.

6.12 VOYPIC - Response following oral evidence session on the Justice Bill, 26 June 2025

The Committee noted a response from Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) to questions asked by the Committee in relation to engagement with DoJ regarding reframing the language around children and replacing 'juvenile' with 'child'.

6.13 Individual - Response regarding the Justice Bill call for evidence

The Committee noted an updated response from an individual regarding its call for evidence on the Justice Bill.

6.14 Children and Young People Event, Long Gallery, 3 July 2025 - Draft Notes

The Committee considered a draft note of the discussions at the event with children and young people held on 3 July 2025.

Members expressed their appreciation of the event as a positive and informative way to engage meaningfully with young people on legislation. Particular thanks was also conveyed to VOYPIC and Include Youth for helping to coordinate and facilitate the event, as well as to the other attending organisations for their support.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the note of the event of 3 July 2025 .

Agreed: To forward the agreed note to VOYPIC and Include Youth and ask that it be shared with the other organisations represented at the event on 3 July 2025.

Members noted that the Committee will return to a number of the issues raised in the written papers on the Justice Bill at a later stage in the Committee's consideration of the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the papers at items 6.3 to 6.14 on the Justice Bill webpage, in line with usual practice.

6.15 Justice Bill – Requests for further information table

The Committee noted a document prepared by the Committee team which tracks Committee requests and responses received in relation to the Justice Bill.

6.16 Justice Bill: Bill Table with Departmental Responses – September 2025

The Committee noted a table of issues cataloguing views and comments made in in written or oral evidence on the Justice Bill against the relevant clauses and proposed amendments.

7. RaiSe Written Paper – Justice Bill: Organised Crime Amendments

The Committee considered an Assembly and Research Information Service (RaiSe) paper providing an overview of the amendments to the Justice Bill relating to organised crime.

The Chairperson informed members that, since the meeting pack was issued, a revised version of the paper has been issued to the Committee Clerk which provides an update on the Department's plans relating to the Crime and Policing Bill.

Agreed: That the revised version of the RaiSE paper be circulated to Members following the meeting.

Agreed: To forward the RaiSE paper to the Department of Justice for a response to the scrutiny points contained in the paper.

8. SL1 The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Extension of Provisions Relating to Live Links for Courts and Tribunals) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025 Department of Justice Retention and Disposal Schedule

The Chairperson advised members that the Department of Justice proposes to make a Statutory Rule under powers conferred by section 90 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (“the 2020 Act”). The Department has proposed that the Rule will come into operation on 24 September 2025 and will be subject to the confirmatory resolution procedure.

Agreed: That the Committee has no objection to the proposed Statutory Rule.

9. Department of Justice Retention and Disposal Schedule

The Committee considered the Department of Justice’s Retention and Disposal Schedule which was laid with the Business Office on 3 July 2025 and is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

Agreed: To ask the Department of Justice to detail how this schedule differs from the previous version and to clarify why certain files are not treated in the same way as other records but are returned to the Ministry of Defence.

Members agreed to consider if they are content with the Schedule at the meeting on 18 September.

10. Department of Justice Corporate Plan 2025-2028 and Business Plan 2025-2026 – Department of Justice written paper

The Committee considered a copy of the Department of Justice’s Corporate Plan 2025-2028 and Business Plan 2025-2026, as well as a summary of progress against the Department’s Business Plan for 2024-25.

The Chairperson expressed some concern that the Corporate Plan and Business Plan do not seem to address the issues highlighted in Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland’s (CJINI) report on Transforming the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland

Members also expressed concerns that the Department had not met the six-month timeframe set out in the report's recommendations.

Agreed: To further consider the matter at the Committee's strategic planning event on 25 September 2025.

Agreed: To seek the views of CJINI on concerning the Department's delay in responding to the report recommendations.

11. Legal Aid – General Authority and Ministerial Directions – Department of Justice written paper

The Committee considered an update on the response to the consultation with statutory consultees on changes to enhance legal aid remuneration relating to Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) work, immigration and asylum advice and assistance limits and changes to the interim payment of disbursements. The Committee also considered a copy of the General Authority increasing the advice and assistance limit to £2,000 for PACE work and £1,000 for immigration, asylum and human trafficking work; and a new Direction decreasing the lower limit of the interim payment of disbursement from £350 to £250 and raising the upper limit from £2,500 to £3,500.

Members noted that the business case for the changes is still being finalised and noted some concerns about lack of timescales for the approval of the business case. .

The Chairperson reiterated her declaration of an interest in relation to an immediate family member who works in the legal profession.

The Chairperson relayed concerns that had been expressed to her at the Opening of the Legal Year by stakeholders in the legal aid profession in relation to legal aid remuneration, and the implications that the delay in implementing the uplift in fees may have on the legal profession. She also advised that concerns have been drawn to her attention about Country Court scale fees.

Agreed: To ask the Department for an update on the status of the Enabling Access to Justice Programme business case, to

include timescales for approval and information on any consultation feedback from stakeholders.

Agreed: To write to the DoJ seeking information on the status of the County Court scale costs.

12. Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Business Plan 2025-26 – Department of Justice written paper

The Committee noted the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) Business Plan 2025-26 for Members to note.

13. Director of Legal Aid Casework – Annual Report 2024-2025, Corporate Plan 2025-2028 and Business Plan 2025-2026

The Committee noted the Director of Legal Aid Casework's Annual Report 2024-2025 and the Legal Service Agency Northern Ireland's (LSANI) Corporate Plan 2025-2028 and Business Plan 2025-2026.

14. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- A response from the Department of Justice regarding the CJINI report 'Transforming the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland: A Strategic Overview'.

Agreed: To consider further during the planned evidence session with the Permanent Secretary.

- A call for evidence from the Committee for the Economy on the Insolvency (Amendment) Bill.

Agreed: To provide a nil response.

- A call for evidence from the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs on the Dilapidation Bill.

Agreed: To provide a nil response.

- A consultation from Cara Hunter MLA on the proposed Private Members Bill – Victims of Sexual Crimes Trauma Mitigation Bill

Agreed: That, if they wish to contribute to the consultation, Members will provide responses via their respective parties.

- Correspondence from Timothy Gaston MLA requesting to register the NI Survivor Council as a Committee consultee.

Agreed: To add the NI Survivor Council to the Committee's stakeholder list.

- Correspondence from VOYPIC inviting members to the Show Us Your Care launch event on 2 October 2025.

Agreed: That, if they wish to attend, members RVSP to VOYPIC directly via the address in the invitation email.

- Correspondence from NSPCC inviting members to a Reception on Equal Protection for Children in NI on 22 September and a request to arrange an informal meeting between the Committee and the keynote speaker in advance of the event.

Agreed: That Committee members would endeavour to attend the reception but are unlikely to have capacity to meet informally with the NSPCC and keynote speaker in advance of the event.

- Correspondence from an individual requesting a meeting with the Committee to discuss concerns regarding the family court system in NI.

Agreed: To consider further as part of the strategic planning day on 25 September 2025.

- Six separate items of correspondences regarding individual complaints or issues.

Agreed: To respond to each individual advising that the Committee has a strategic, policy and legislative role in relation to justice matters and does not get involved in individual cases; and advise that they may wish to engage with their political representatives or other administrative or legal avenues which may be available in relation to their cases.

- Copy correspondence from an individual to Alex Easton MP regarding matters of domestic abuse, the family courts system and statutory services in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: To respond to the individual, copying in Mr Easton, acknowledging the correspondence and advising of the Committee's continued interest and concern in relation to these matters.

- Correspondence from an individual regarding access to the Bar of Northern Ireland for students.

Agreed: To forward the correspondence to the Bar of Northern Ireland and to the Department of Justice for comment, subject to the individual's consent.

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- A response from the Department of Justice regarding the Northern Ireland Executive Report on the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.
- An update from the Department of Justice regarding the outcome of the 2025-26 June Monitoring Round.
- Correspondence from the Department of Justice providing a copy of the completed rural needs and equality screening documents regarding the Department's final Opening Budget allocation for 2025-26.

- A response from the Department of Justice regarding the types of offences being considered for out-of-court disposals and the impact on public confidence.
- Correspondence from the Department of Justice providing an updated response regarding the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021.
- Correspondence from the Minister of Justice regarding the 2025-26 Prison Service Pay Settlement.
- Correspondence from the Department of Justice confirming that the Minister has upheld the decision to decline the application from K9SAR to join Northern Ireland Search and Rescue practitioners' group.
- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the Budget 2026-27 to 2029-30 Information Gathering process.
- Correspondence from the Department of Justice providing information on the Department's bids to the second tranche of Public Sector Transformation Funding.
- A copy of the Department of Justice's Budget 2026-27 to 2029-30 return to the Department of Finance.
- Notification from the Department of Justice of the publication of official statistics bulletin on case processing time for criminal cases dealt with at courts in Northern Ireland 2024-25.
- Notification from the Department of Justice of the publication of Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Provisional Figures and Mortgage Bulletin.

- A response from the Department of Finance regarding reviews of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.
- Correspondence from the Department of Health recommending consideration of Shankill Women's Centre for future committee meetings at an external location.
- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the Northern Ireland Fiscal Council's assessment of the implications of the Spending Review.
- Copy correspondence from the Committee for The Executive Office to the Department of Justice regarding the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.
- Copy correspondence from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee regarding Regulation (EU) 2024/2865 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures.
- A copy of the CJINI Follow-Up Review of its 2020 inspection report on the detention of persons in police custody in Northern Ireland.
- A response from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) regarding its Retention and Disposal Schedule.
- Correspondence from the Policing Board Northern Ireland providing a copy of its consultation into the revised PSNI code of ethics.
- A Press Release from the Prisoner Ombudsman regarding the publication of a report into a death in custody.

- A response from the Police Service of Northern Ireland regarding Health Needs Assessment.
- A copy of a response from an individual to the Department's consultation regarding a single court-ordered community order for children.
- Copies of the Department of Justice Investing Activity report for July and August 2025.
- Department of Justice Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25.
- Northern Ireland Fiscal Council's NI Public Expenditure Databank.
- Pivotal tracker report – 18 months of the Northern Ireland Executive: a review.

The Committee also noted that the following list of annual reports and accounts for bodies across the justice sector were laid over the summer recess period:

- Forensic Science Northern Ireland Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025;
- NICTS Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25;
- Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25;
- PSNI Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25;
- PSNI Pension Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25;
- LSANI Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25;
- CJINI Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25;
- Youth Justice Agency Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25;
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25;
- Northern Ireland Policing Board Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25;
- Northern Ireland Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25;

- Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025;
- Security Industry Authority Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25;
- Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland Annual Report 2024-2025; and
- National Crime Agency Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25.

Agreed: Any Member wishing to receive a full copy of any report should contact the Committee office.

15. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the Department of Justice's proposed forward work programme and correspondence requesting to reschedule the oral evidence session with the department's Permanent Secretary, originally scheduled for 18 September 2025, until after he had met with the Criminal Justice Board.

Agreed: To reschedule the oral evidence session with the DoJ Permanent Secretary until after his meeting with the Criminal Justice Board.

The Committee also noted correspondence from the Department advising that a written briefing on Adult Restorative Justice, originally scheduled to be considered at today's meeting, could not be brought forward due to other work pressures and it is hoped that it can be rescheduled for early October 2025.

Agreed: To proceed with the sessions in the Department's proposed forward work programme, subject to the changes as agreed at today's meeting.

The Committee considered the draft Committee forward work programme.

Agreed: To proceed with the sessions in the Committee's forward work programme, subject to the changes as agreed at today's meeting.

The Chairperson informed members that the Committee's strategic planning event will take place on the afternoon of Thursday 25 September in Room 106 of Parliament Buildings.

16. Chairperson's Business

16.1 Department of Justice – Proposed meeting between the Minister of Justice and the Chairperson and deputy Chairperson

The Chairperson informed Members that the Minister of Justice had requested a meeting with the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson in relation to a number of matters of Committee business.

Agreed: That the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson would meet with the Minister to discuss these matters on behalf of the Committee.

16.2 Police Service of Northern Ireland – Invite to the PSNI and RUCGC Senior Officers Annual Dinner

The Chairperson informed Members that she had received an invitation from the Chief Constable and deputy Chief Constable to the PSNI and RUCGC Senior Officers Annual Dinner on Friday 3 October 2025.

Agreed: That the Committee is content for the Chairperson to attend the event.

16.3 Police Service of Northern Ireland – Invited to the Highly Commended Awards Ceremony

The Chairperson informed the Committee that she had received a personal invitation from the Chief Constable to attend the PSNI's Highly Commended

Awards Ceremony here at Parliament Buildings on Wednesday 17 September 2025, and that she had been invited to speak at this event.

The Chairperson confirmed that she will attend the event and that any remarks made will be in a personal capacity.

17. Any Other Business

The Chairperson expressed concern that the Department of Justice's 'unlawfully at large list' is not publicised widely and that the public would not know who was on the list unless they proactively checked the online list themselves.

Members expressed concerns that victims and their families were not actively informed if an individual charged in relation to an offence of which they were a victim has absconded, which could lead to further trauma.

Agreed: That the Committee write to the Department of Justice to express Members concerns in relation to this matter; to request clarification on whether it is a new policy and, if so, why it has changed; and to ask why people who have absconded and have not been returned to prison have been removed from the list.

18. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

Members were advised that next meeting will take place on Thursday 18 September at 2.00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Meeting was adjourned at 4.31pm.

Paul Frew MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Justice

18 September 2025