



Department for  
**Communities**  
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[REDACTED]  
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Our ref: SUB 0950-2025  
Date: 17 December 2025

**From: The DALO**

Ms Emer Boyle  
Communities Committee Clerk  
Room 430  
Parliament Buildings  
Ballymiscaw  
Stormont  
Belfast  
BT4 3XX

Dear Emer,

Thank for your letter of 12 December 2025 (CC/25/441) regarding the Sign Language Bill.

I can confirm that the Department has now instructed OLC to draft the amendments marked as 'agreed' in our last correspondence, and that Minister has informed his Executive colleagues of these proposed amendments. We will seek to provide the drafted amendments prior to the Committee meeting on 8 January, although – as your letter notes – this timing will be challenging.

We also note that the informal and formal clause by clause consideration, and discussion of the Department's other recent letters regarding the Bill, may bring forward other areas for potential amendments. Departmental officials will be available on 8 and 15 January to brief the Committee and engage in further discussion.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

**Laura Coffey**  
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer  
Private Office



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES**

Room 430  
Parliament Buildings  
BELFAST  
BT4 3XX

12 December 2025  
Our ref: CC/25/441

Laura Coffey  
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer  
Department for Communities  
Level 9  
Causeway Exchange  
Belfast

Dear Laura

**Sign Language Bill - Departmental Amendments**

At its meeting on 11 December, the Committee was briefed by officials on various aspects of the Sign Language Bill and referred to the correspondence provided to Committee on 9 December in relation to whether the Department accepted, partly accepted or rejected the Committee's requests for amendments to the Bill.

Following the officials evidence, Committee confirmed that it was content for the Department to **proceed with the 'accepted' amendments** and Committee understands that officials wished to advise the Minister as soon as possible and instruct OLC accordingly.

Committee understands that officials hope to provide the Committee with the revised drafting, to include these amendments, for its informal clause by clause session at the meeting on 8 January 2026. Committee understands that the turnaround time in relation to these is constrained.

For the purposes of clarity, Members had not yet had the opportunity to review and discuss the correspondence received on 9<sup>th</sup> as a Committee prior to the meeting on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>. There will be time scheduled at the meeting on 08 January for more fulsome consideration of Department's response and for consideration of draft amendments provided by the Assembly's Bill Office for Committee consideration.

Following this, the Committee will then move to informal clause by clause consideration and formal clause by clause consideration (the week following the end of informal clause by clause). It is possible that **the Committee could agree to seek further information or amendments at the informal clause by clause stage.**

It would therefore be helpful if officials could be available for the meetings on 08 and 15 January 2025 in order to respond to Committee queries directly.

Committee is appreciative of the officials' continued support.

Yours sincerely

**Emer Boyle**

**Clerk to the Committee for Communities**