

From: The President

Paul Frew MLA
Chair of the Justice Committee
NI Assembly
By email: committee.justice@niassembly.gov.uk

2 March 2026

Dear Chair,

Attacks on Solicitors

I am writing to follow up on the Law Society's recent presentation to the All-Party Group on Access to Justice in respect of increasing reports of intimidation and harassment directed at solicitors.

We were grateful for your attendance and that of other Justice Committee members at that meeting, where you heard directly from our member, Emma Lyons, who bravely told her story of the threatening and intimidating behaviour she has endured by the former partner of one of her clients.

The Law Society is alarmed at the scale of abuse directed at some our members. Of the 480 members who responded to a recent survey carried out by the Society, 66% said that they had been subjected to some form of threat or abuse in the course of their work, ranging from online harassment to physical attacks.

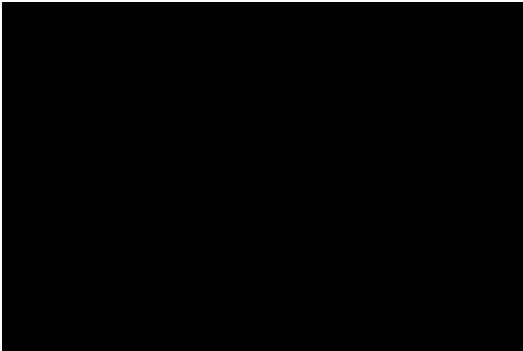
We are also concerned at the lack of an effective response by the PSNI, and indeed, the wider Criminal Justice System. As discussed at the meeting, one aspect that is of particular concern to the Law Society is the need to ensure that where a perpetrator is convicted of an attack on a solicitor the penalty imposed should reflect the seriousness of the offence.

Due to our concern, we have asked the Justice Minister to consider introducing a Statutory Presumption against a Suspended Sentence in cases where the victim of an attack is an Officer of the Court. The Department of Justice has said that they would consider this request, but not within the current Sentencing Bill.

We would therefore like to ask the Justice Committee to support an amendment to the Bill which would introduce a Statutory Presumption against suspending a sentence where the victim is an Officer of the Court. Attacks on officers of the court risk undermining the rule of law and confidence in the justice system.

When the Sentencing Bill comes before the Justice Committee, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Committee to discuss this proposal further.

Yours sincerely,



President