

Response ID ANON-VNMK-H2UJ-N

Submitted to Criminal Justice (Sentencing etc) Bill
Submitted on 2026-05-06 13:41:31

Introduction

What is your name?

Name:

[REDACTED]

What is your email address?

Email:

[REDACTED]

If you are providing a submission on behalf of an organisation or business, please state its name.

Organisation:

[REDACTED]

The Committee for Justice has agreed to publish all responses as part of the survey results. If you would like to have your survey results anonymised and for us not to publish your name or organisation, please indicate so here.

I would like my views to be anonymous and understand that my name and organisation details will be withheld, along with any identifiers in the response, but my views will still be published.

Exercise of court's discretion when sentencing

Clause 1 outlines the purposes and principles of sentencing. It sets out the factors that the court must have regard to for the purposes of sentencing, which are: the punishment of offenders; for the protection of the public; the reduction of crime by deterrence; the rehabilitation of offenders; and, the making of reparations by offenders to persons affected by their offences. Do you agree with the purposes of sentencing as outlined above?

Not Answered

Please provide information to support your answer here::

Clause 1 also defines the principles of sentencing as proportionate, fair and transparent. Do you agree with these being set as the principles of sentencing?

Not Answered

Please provide information to support your answer here::

Do you have anything further to add on Clause 1 of the Bill?

Not Answered

Please provide any further information relating to Clause 1 here::

Clause 2 imposes a duty to follow guidance relevant to the case when sentencing an offender, unless it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so and to give reasons in relation to sentencing. Do you support the objectives of this clause?

Not Answered

Please provide information to support your answer here::

Do you have anything further to add on Clause 2 of the Bill?

Not Answered

Please provide information to support your answer here::

Part 1 - Exercise of court's discretion when sentencing - Do you have anything further to add on Part 1 of the Bill?

Not Answered

Please provide information to support your answer here::

Public Workers etc

Clause 37 introduces a new offence of assault on a public worker and defines a public worker as being a person employed or engaged to provide a service to the public, performing a public duty or delivering a public service. Do you agree with the new offence of assault on a public worker?

Yes

Please provide information to support your answer here::

NIAS recognises that, at present, statutory offences for assault apply only to a small number of specified professions and welcomes the proposed new offence which has the potential to broaden legislative protections for public workers.

NIAS condemns all violence and aggression which is directed towards people providing any form of public service and supports the introduction of enhanced legal safeguards to help deter perpetrators and hold them to account.

Do you agree with the definition of a public worker as defined in Clause 37?

Yes

Please provide information to support your answer here::

NIAS considers that the wide scope of the proposed definition would provide the opportunity to increase statutory protection for individuals working for the public in the broadest sense should they be subjected to assault, regardless of their employment type, role etc.

Clause 37 proposes that a person found guilty of assaulting a public worker could receive a fine and/or be sentenced to up to 2 years imprisonment. Do you believe the penalties for this offence are appropriate?

Yes

Please provide information to support your answer here::

Unfortunately, NIAS staff continue to face sustained levels of violence and aggression when carrying out their job which is completely unacceptable, and the Trust supports any legislative measure which would enhance enforcement of perpetrators.

In particular, NIAS welcomes the extension of the maximum sentencing period on summary conviction to 12 months that would be brought into effect by Clause 37 as introduced. This would align with the maximum sentencing provisions applied in other jurisdictions and may help to elicit a stronger deterrent effect.

Clause 38 proposes introducing a new aggravator if an offence is committed against a public worker who is acting in the exercise of functions as a public worker. Do you agree with the inclusion of an offence of aggravation by assault on a public worker?

Yes

Please provide information to support your answer here::

NIAS welcomes the introduction of the statutory aggravation as proposed which may, with the other provisions of the Bill, strengthen safeguards for public workers who are subjected to assault.

Do you have any other comments on Clauses 37 to 39 of the Bill?

No

Please provide information to support your answer here::

Part 6 - Particular persons or groups. Do you have any further comments on Part 6 of the Bill?

No

Please provide information to support your answer here::