

From: Secretariat - <[REDACTED]>

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To: +Comm Justice Public Email <committee.justice@niassembly.gov.uk>

Subject: APG on Reducing Harm Related to Gambling - response to call for evidence

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Hi Kathy,

Apologies for the delay. Please see response to the call for evidence on the Criminal Justice (Sentencing etc) Bill on behalf of the APG on Reducing Harm Related to Gambling.

The Minister of Justice has stated that the intention behind adding community-based requirements to suspended sentences is to allow rehabilitative work to be carried out where it might be helpful to do so and to add a visible element to making reparations that could be realised via a community based sentence. Do you agree with the intent behind enacting Clauses 8-10?

Yes.

The APG on Reducing Harm Related to Gambling supports these clauses.

According to the Gambling Survey for Great Britain, 16.3% of adults classified as “problem gamblers” stated they have committed a crime because of gambling.

Research indicates that as addiction escalates, often worsened by loyalty schemes, individuals resort to “financial misappropriation,” such as taking loans they intend to repay with winnings. These offenders are typically first-time offenders unlikely to have a “criminal lifestyle”.

Therefore, allowing rehabilitative work to be carried out by allowing people to access gambling treatment and support is a positive step that recognises that gambling addiction (also known a gambling disorder) is a mental illness which results in a loss of control. It addresses the cause of an offender’s crime, thereby reducing the risk of reoffending.

Do you have any other comments on Clauses 8 to 10 of the Bill?

Yes.

Clause 8 of Bill states that a community requirement is a requirement that may be authorised under Schedule 1 to the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 1996. Section 5 of this schedule details “requirements as to treatment for drug or alcohol dependency”. The Committee should consider whether the schedule should be updated to refer to gambling disorder.

On behalf of the Secretariat



Secretariat

Phone: [REDACTED] | **Post:** c/o Philip McGuigan MLA, Parliament