Dear Justice Committee Clerk and Members,

I would like to begin by extending my thanks for having The Rainbow Project, alongside our colleagues in HereNI and the Women's Resource and Development Agency, along to the Committee's evidence sessions on the Sentencing Bill. We sincerely appreciated the engagement of Committee members and the respectful discussion of what are undoubtedly sensitive and difficult topics, and hope this evidence was useful for the Committee's deliberations.

As per the evidence we provided, and our written submission to the call for evidence, The Rainbow Project supports the addition of 'transgender identity' as a protected group within the additional aggravators being introduced to the legislation. See below our initial suggestion for amendment text contained within our written submission to the Committee:

> *"transgender identity" means a person who is undergoing, proposing to undergo or having undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment, including transsexual and non-binary persons"*

Following further consideration, as well as discussions with Departmental officials, we would recommend the following definition:

> *"transgender identity group" means a group of persons defined by reference to their transgender identity, including people who are undergoing, proposing to undergo or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment, including transgender men, transgender women, and non-binary persons.*

We would be happy to address any further questions that the Committee has regarding this. We would once again encourage the Committee to progress this as a Committee amendment, on a cross-party basis, in acknowledgement of the importance of protecting transgender people in Northern Ireland from transphobic violence and abuse.

[redacted]
Policy & Public Affairs Manager
The Rainbow Project

Belfast
Cathedral House
23-31 Waring Street
Belfast, BT1 2DX
028 9031 9030

Foyle
Waterloo House
Magazine Street
Derry / Londonderry, BT48 6HH
028 7128 3030

TheRainbowProjectNI
info@rainbow-project.org
rainbow-project.org

Registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC100064. Company limited by guarantee No. NI030101 Rainbow Health Ltd.

Northern Ireland Assembly
Committee for Justice

[redacted]
Rainbow Project
By email: [redacted]

23 October 2026

Dear [redacted]

Criminal Justice (Sentencing etc) Bill – Committee Deliberations

At its meeting on 22 October 2026, the Committee for Justice continued its deliberations on the Criminal Justice (Sentencing etc) Bill.

The Committee discussed the list of aggravators and protected groups at Clause 33 in the Bill as introduced, as well as additional aggravators that had been suggested in the evidence received. While no decisions have been taken, the Committee agreed to write to the Rainbow Project to seek clarification, to assist its consideration, on what terminology would be most appropriate to incorporate into the Bill to provide protection for transgender people.

To enable the Committee to reach its final position on these matters within the limited time remaining, I would appreciate a response by 30 October 2026.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Kathy O'Hanlon
Clerk to the Committee for Justice

Room 345, Parliament Buildings, Ballymiscaw, Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3XX
Telephone: (028) 905 21033

E-mail: committee.justice@niassembly.gov.uk