

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Máinnystrie O tha Laa

www.justice-ni.gov.uk

Minister's Office
Castle Buildings Block C
Stormont Estate
Ballymiscaw
Belfast
BT4 3SG

JCP\25\307

Kathy O'Hanlon
Clerk to the Committee for Justice
Room 242
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast BT4 3XX

18 December 2025

Dear Kathy,

JUSTICE BILL – DNA & FINGERPRINTS REVIEW MECHANISM

I refer to your letter dated 28 November 2025 which contains queries raised by the Justice Committee regarding the Department's review mechanism proposals relating to the new DNA and fingerprints retention framework outlined in Part 1 of the Justice Bill.

As per the Department's letter dated 11 November 2025, an individual will have the right to make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Biometrics Commissioner. The Commissioner's complaint function will involve assessing whether the retention of the individual's DNA and fingerprints is lawful and compliant with Part 6 of PACE NI and any Review Regulations introduced by the Department.

As matters of national security (and counter-terrorism powers) remain excepted, consideration of the issue of whether the Northern Ireland Biometrics Commissioner should hold Developed Vetting (DV) clearance to allow them to make decisions in such instances is unnecessary. The Commissioner would not have the remit to make decisions where matters of national security are involved. This would be in keeping with the remit of the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner.

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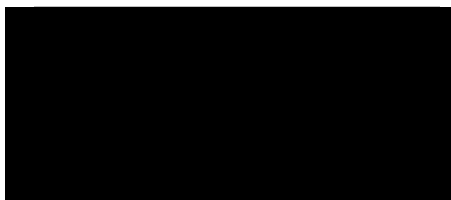
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I trust you will find this helpful.

Yours sincerely,



**CAOIMHE MCKEOWN
DALO**



**Northern Ireland Assembly
Committee for Justice**

Caoimhe McKeown
DALO
Department of Justice
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SQ

28 November 2025

Justice Bill – DNA Fingerprint Review Mechanism

Dear Caoimhe

At its meeting on 20 November 2025, the Committee for Justice considered correspondence from the Department (JCP\25\285) in relation to the Justice Bill's DNA and fingerprint review mechanism and agreed to ask for the following:

- clarification of whether an individual whose appeal to the PSNI to have their data deleted is denied, has the right of appeal to the new Biometrics Commissioner; and,
- whether the Biometrics Commissioner should have Developed Vetting (DV) clearance to allow them to make decisions where matters of national security are involved.

I should be grateful for a response by 17 December 2025.

Yours sincerely

Kathy O'Hanlon

**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