



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

THURSDAY 25 JUNE 2020

Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Paul Givan MLA (Chairperson)  
Ms Linda Dillon MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Doug Beattie MLA  
Ms Jemma Dolan MLA  
Mr Paul Frew MLA\*  
Ms Rachel Woods MLA

\* These Members attended the meeting via Starleaf video conferencing.

Apologies: Mr Gordon Dunne MLA  
Ms Emma Rogan MLA  
Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darragh (Assembly Clerk)  
Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Miss Leanne Johnston (Clerical Supervisor)

*The meeting commenced at 10.03 a.m. in open session.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the oral evidence sessions should be reported by Hansard.

**1. Apologies**

As above.

The Clerk informed the Committee that, under Standing Order 115(6), Mr Dunne had delegated authority to the Chairman, Mr Givan and Ms Rogan had delegated authority to the Deputy Chairperson, Ms Dillon, to vote on their behalf.

**2. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18 June 2020.

### 3. Matters Arising

#### Item 1 – Updated Summary of Written Submissions on the Bill

The Committee noted an updated summary of written submissions received on the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that a further submission had been received from an individual regarding parental alienation and contact denial which would be circulated to Members.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to hold an informal private meeting with the individual to discuss the specific issues raised.

#### Item 2 – Correspondence from the Attorney General on his oral evidence on the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill

The Committee considered correspondence from the Attorney General clarifying his response regarding Clause 10 and the relevance of the Istanbul Convention following his oral evidence session on 18 June 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to refer the Attorney General's correspondence to the Minister of Justice with his written submission and the Hansard of the oral evidence session and ask her to consider and respond on the issue of competence regarding extra-territorial jurisdiction.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request legal advice on the competence of the Bill in respect of extra-territorial jurisdiction.

### 4. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill – Evidence Session – Cara-Friend/ HERE NI and Rainbow Project

Ms Ashling Twomey, Advocacy Officer, Rainbow Project joined the meeting in person and Ms Danielle Roberts, Policy Officer, HERE NI, Ms Amanda McGurk, LGBTI Support Officer, Cara-Friend and Mr Gavin Boyd, Policy and Advocacy Manager, Rainbow Project joined the meeting at 10.08 a.m. via video conferencing.

Ms Roberts, Ms McGurk and Ms Twomey outlined a number of issues in relation to the provisions of the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill and highlighted other relevant areas not currently covered in the Bill.

*Ms Dolan joined the meeting at 11.29 a.m.*

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance and they left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to ask the Police Service of Northern Ireland for its views on the benefits of Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and

Domestic Abuse Protection Orders in protecting victims if introduced in this Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to commission research on the use of the reasonableness defence provided for in Clause 12 in other jurisdictions.

## **5. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill – Evidence Session – Evangelical Alliance**

Mr David Smyth, Head of Evangelical Alliance NI and Ms Dawn McAvoy, Researcher, Evangelical Alliance NI joined the meeting at 11.42 a.m.

Mr Smyth and Ms McAvoy outlined a number of issues in relation to the provisions of the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill and highlighted other relevant areas not currently covered in the Bill.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

*The Chairperson left the meeting at 12.32 p.m.*

*The Deputy Chairperson took the Chair at 12.32 p.m.*

*The Chairperson rejoined the meeting and resumed the Chair at 12.36 p.m.*

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance and they left the meeting.

## **6. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill – Evidence Session – The Migrant Centre NI**

Ms Kendall Bousquet, the Migrant Centre NI, joined the meeting via video conferencing at 12.49 p.m.

Ms Bousquet outlined a number of issues in relation to the provisions of the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill and highlighted other relevant areas not currently covered in the Bill.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Bousquet for her attendance and she left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek clarity on the obligation to share information on immigration status of domestic abuse victims with the Home Office and whether the issue falls within the competence of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

*The Committee agreed to take Chairperson's Business at the end of the meeting.*

## **7. Any Other Business**

None.

## **8. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 30 June 2020 at 1.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The Committee agreed to take Chairperson's Business in closed session.*

*The meeting moved into closed session at 1.20 p.m.*

## **9. Chairperson's Business**

At the request of the Chairpersons' Liaison Group (CLG) the Committee considered proposals to change the Assembly sitting days.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed a response on the matter to send to CLG.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.28 p.m.

**Mr Paul Givan MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Justice**