

REQUEST FROM: FINANCE COMMITTEE – DALO READOUT – MEETING WEDNESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2025

Point 1 – Members are concerned about the slippage in timescale for this LCM to be brought to the Assembly for agreement and would request a further urgent update on the timescale for the LCM and for detail of the responses to Departmental engagement and level of risk for the LCM as referenced in the paper to the Executive.

Response –

Supplementary to our reply of 5 January, the Department of Finance received responses from Departments reflecting their consideration of the Bill and their engagement with their own stakeholder groups:

- DAERA raised no specific issues with the Bill.
- DfE raised no issues of concern arising from their engagement with stakeholder bodies. Individual respondents recognised that provisions appeared reasonable and broadly in line with existing standards of conduct and transparency; and noted that Codes of Conduct and related policies would need to be reviewed to ensure alignment and bodies would need appropriate training and assurance measures.
- DoH confirmed that stakeholder feedback had not highlighted any issues that would dissuade the Department from supporting the extension of this Bill to Northern Ireland.
- DfI reported that no substantive issues had been raised or identified that would need to be reflected in the Executive Paper; noted that ALBs will already have a form of ‘Code of Conduct/Ethics’ in place; and hoped that any administrative burden would be kept to a minimum.
- DoJ noted the key themes raised by their sponsored bodies including:
 - ~ the potential for additional internal work in order to comply with the requirements of the legislation, including exercises to review staff handbooks, policies and processes;
 - ~ a recognition that this work extended to reviewing procedures relating to services provided by external service providers;
 - ~ the potential of an increase in workloads due to growth in cases under the new offences; and
 - ~ resultant resourcing implications and requests for adequate resource to fulfil their statutory duties in this regard.

- TEO raised a specific technical query but raised no substantive issues or risks.

Reflection in the Executive paper

The Executive paper set out that, in general, no objections have been raised about the Bill's policy objective and its extension here, noting that public officials and public authorities here should not be held to a lower standard than those in Great Britain.

It also noted the provisions as the Executive's response to the specific recommendations of the Infected Blood Inquiry, in parallel with the response of the other administrations.

It reflected the expectation that resourcing implications would be business-as-usual activity, such as the review and potential refreshing of existing codes of ethics or standards.