From the Minister of Finance

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Matthew, A Chara

Marriage and Civil Partnership Bill

The Executive has agreed to a draft Marriage and Civil Partnership Bill (the Bill) and to its introduction. I attach copies of the Bill and its Explanatory and Financial Memorandum (EFM) which I wish to share in confidence with you and your fellow Committee members in advance of the Bill being formally introduced to the Assembly. My officials have previously met with the Committee to give an overview of the Bill's content.

The main provisions of the Bill are to:

i. Include belief marriage—legally binding marriage by people who subscribe to non-religious belief systems such as humanism—in the marriage law on the same basis as religious marriage.
ii. Increase the minimum age for marriage and civil partnership from the present 16 to 18.
iii. Make legal provision regarding the recognition of civil partnerships made outside this jurisdiction and involving parties under the new minimum age of 18
iv. Criminalise the arrangement of marriages that involve people under the age of 18

My officials are available to attend Committee and provide further briefing when Committee members require.

Is mise le meas

JOHN O'DOWD MLA
MINISTER OF FINANCE