

Response ID ANON-2C9X-7X6T-Y

Submitted to Display of Flags and Emblems - Call for Evidence
Submitted on 2026-07-23 12:36:52

Clause 1: Removal of flags or emblems in the public interest

6 Do you agree with Clause 1 of the Bill?

Yes

7 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

We moved here 14 years ago from England to Crumlin.

When going out as a family we were shocked at the amount of flags there were displayed on lamp posts etc, in areas outside of Crumlin.

To see these flags flying, even our own Union Jack, I felt intimidated by. Never have I felt this way before.

In England, flags are erected for commemorative reasons, such as St George's Day, but are taken down again soon after.

Here flags seem to fly whenever they want to and for however long they (public) want them to be, quite often all year round. How must this look to overseas visitors? I know how i feel, intimidated by my own countries flags, being used to stake control of an area.

Our first experience of this was in Belfast where flags, the Union Jack (often upside down, how meaningful the flag actually is to that community that they can't even put it up correctly, further displaying that it is not a symbol of respect but a marking of territory) and flags at that point i hadn't a clue about, which i now know to UVF/UDA/gang flags with the Red Hand flag and the flag of Northern Ireland as an after thought.

As an English person I felt intimidated driving in these areas, raking to closing my eyes (i'm not the driver) until we are out of them.

This is not only Belfast, at this point in our Northern Ireland 'adventure' the same could be said for Antrim, Ballymena, Lisburn, Derry to name but a few.

I remember one day driving through an area where one day the UK flag was displayed on lamp posts on one side of the street, the following day the other side had the Irish flag displayed. For some reason I feel less intimidated by the Irish flag.

If I had my way flags would be banned, any flags of any country/organisation. I know this is unlikely so my more likely solution would be allowing a week either side of an event for election of flags and taking them down again. Then for whomever to go and remove if any are still flying. As this would be at a cost to the tax payers would an increase in rates to subsidise this be appropriate? This may increase the likelihood of the community making sure they are removed after an event.

In saying that i'm sure Mr Bryson would soon find a reason why that couldn't happen.

Clause 2: Sensitive places

8 Do you agree with Clause 2 of the Bill?

Yes

9 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

As previous answer.

Plus, people need to feel safe in their shared communities. Children going to school shouldn't feel scared when other emblems are displayed for all to see.

My children have attended Integrated schools, one just sat GCSE'S, the other in her final year of Primary school.

On looking at their next schools, my eldest for 6th form, upon looking at schools in Belfast as we don't have a 6th form in Crumlin (ridiculous considering the amount of children that are bussed out of our area every day to attend a high school in other areas because they offer a 6th form because their local school doesn't), I have felt intimidated. This was going to St Louise's. The school was great, included all the subjects my son wants to study, the staff and pupils we met were lovely too, but all I could think about was the flags coming into the area. Would my son be safe in this environment? I'm sure he would be but the little niggle of doubt is there. If the flags were not there would I still have that niggle, I doubt it.

Clause 3: Procedure for / notification of, or giving views on, flags or emblems

10 Do you agree with Clause 3 of the Bill?

Yes

11 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

I think i may have answered in previous 2 questions.

Clause 4: Code of Practice

12 Do you agree with Clause 4 of the Bill?

Yes

13 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Accountability.

Everyone must know as soon as possible of their Rights and responsibilities around this contentious issue.

I remember watching a senior policeman, may have been the Assistant Chief Constable (fairly young looking gentleman for a change in a role of such responsibility, being interviewed by Steven Nolan, stating that police would/could remove these flags and where safe to do so would be. I haven't seen this happen but have noticed more gang flags being erected outside PSNI stations and not touched (two that I have seen being Holywood and Antrim).

Clause 5: Offence of obstructing the Department in removal of flag or emblem

14 Do you agree with Clause 5 of the Bill?

Yes

15 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Something has to change the sooner the better. These people seem to think they are above the law. The sooner this starts to happen the better!

Clause 6: Request for assistance from police

16 Do you agree with Clause 6 of the Bill?

Yes

17 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

If it is a law then it needs to be supported by PSNI

Clause 7: Interpretation

18 Do you agree with Clause 7 of the Bill?

Yes

19 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Everyone needs to be able to understand this Bill. From every side of the community

Clause 8: Commencement

20 Do you agree with Clause 8 of the Bill?

Yes

21 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

The sooner the better

Clause 9: Short title

22 Do you agree with Clause 9 of the Bill?

Yes

23 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible: