

Response ID ANON-6Z2U-8U6F-Z

Submitted to Display of Flags and Emblems - Call for Evidence

Submitted on 2026-08-06 13:07:06

Introduction

1 Confirmation of having read the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee's Privacy Notice.

I confirm that I have read the privacy notice.

2 What is your name?

Name:

[REDACTED]

3 What is your email address?

Email:

[REDACTED]

4 If you are providing a submission on behalf of an organisation or business, please state its name.

Organisation:

5 The Committee for Infrastructure has agreed to publish all responses as part of the survey results. If you would like to have your survey results anonymised and for us not to publish your name or organisation, please indicate so here.

I would like my views to be anonymous and understand that my name and organisation details will be withheld, along with any identifiers in the response, but my views will still be published.

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:

It is important that flags that denote one tradition or beliefs system, or subscribe to inappropriate groups should not be in public places or neutral places. It will be incumbent on the Department to intervene and I also think a public committee or stakeholder panel of elected public representatives should be involved to assist with making these key decisions.

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:

When going to the hospital, or school or enjoying time at a leisure facility or shared communal space such as a city park it is not appropriate to be seeing lots of flags denoting particular ideologies. Particularly when some of these flags denote support for violent groups, extremist political groups and carry messages of violence and guns. I agree that all flags should be removed from such 'sensitive' places and refer back to my previous point about the Department being assisted by a public committee to do this.

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:

An online portal is a great idea and should also be accompanied by a way to report via telephone/ post for those not online, or without access to a computer/ smart phone.

I also think the Online Portal would have to be carefully monitored by a dedicated and trained team. There would need to be robust data protection mechanisms in place and the option for anonymity so that people may report securely, particularly if they are from vulnerable groups who may be exposed to threats and intimidation by paramilitary organisations in their local area.

This Online Portal would be a good new alternative to the Flags Commission who have been collecting data on flags previously but without such a far-reaching way of individuals to feed back.

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:

I completely agree with a published Code of Practice and if there was the option to issue this sooner so that it came into effect sooner than 18 months from when the Bill becomes an Act, I would also opt for that.

I think it is imperative that the Code of Practice be written in clear terminology for every member of the public to access and that options such as large font, brail and sign language interpretation of this, as well as translations into Irish, Ulster Scots, Arabic, Mandarin, Polish, Spanish, French, German, Italian, and other key languages be available for those who need to access these.

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

14 Do you agree with Clause 5 of the Bill?

No

15 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

I think that whilst a monetary fine is one option, it may not be a strong enough deterrent and there should be stronger and more human-centered penalties in place for those who obstruct the removal of a flag. For example, instead of a monetary fine of up to £1,000 there should be a community service order for those involved in the flags displayed that they should have to work in their local community in not-for-profit organisations and other areas locally to be involved with work that benefits the place they call home.

Clause 6: Request for assistance from police

16 Do you agree with Clause 6 of the Bill?

No

17 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

I do not think the PSNI should be called to be involved in the removal of flags as they are not a politically neutral force within the North of Ireland. This has been evidenced by how recent protests and events have been policed.

Instead I believe if there is risk of a 'breach of a peace' a potential 'jury' like system of a panel of Civil Servants could be called upon to assist with removal of flags. I also think it is imperative to invite representatives from local organisations and community groups to be involved in why flags are being removed. Education principles of respect and tolerance need to be in built to this approach.

Removing the PSNI from this decision making will enable a more neutral attitude and flexibility in a wholistic approach to flags, in my opinion.

Clause 7: Interpretation

18 Do you agree with Clause 7 of the Bill?

Yes

19 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

I agree with these definitions as outlined

7.—(1) In this Act—

15 “Department” means the Department for Infrastructure,

“flag or emblem” includes bunting, poster, banner, billboard or similar medium of display,

“national and cultural identity” is to be construed in accordance with section

78F(3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998,

20 “proscribed organisation” has the meaning given in section 3 of the Terrorism Act 2000,

“public authority” means a person who is exercising functions of a public nature,

25

“public place” means any street, road or highway and any place to which at the material time the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission,

“public street furniture” includes lampposts, bus shelters, trees, rubbish and recycling bins, street signs, bollards, railings and fences.

30 (2) In this Act, references to a flag or emblem mean a flag or emblem that is attached to public street furniture and displayed in a public place.

Clause 8: Commencement

20 Do you agree with Clause 8 of the Bill?

Yes

21 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

I agree with this for the time being but emphasise that if it would be possible to bring the clauses of this Bill into operation prior to the date of 1 January 2028, that this would be preferable.

Clause 9: Short title

22 Do you agree with Clause 9 of the Bill?

Not Answered

23 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Yes I agree with the short title outlined as below:

9. This Act may be cited as the Display of Flags and Emblems Act (Northern Ireland) 2026.