Northern Ireland Assembly

Committee for Justice

Minutes of Proceedings

Tuesday 10 November 2026

Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Paul Frew MLA (Chairperson)

Emma Sheerin MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Maurice Bradley MLA

Connie Egan MLA

Ciara Ferguson MLA

Brian Kingston MLA

Patsy McGlone MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Doug Beattie MLA

Aoife Finnegan MLA

In Attendance: Kathy O'Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)

Thomas McKillop (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Gareth Black (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Danielle Saunders (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 9.39am in public session.

Agreed: That the oral evidence session on the Victims and Witnesses of Crime Bill with the PSNI will be recorded by Hansard.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3 November 2026.

3. Victims and Witnesses of Crime Bill – Police Service of Northern Ireland oral evidence

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 9.42am:

Anthony McNally, Assistant Chief Constable;
Gary McDonald, Chief Superintendent; and
Marty Reid, Superintendent

The witnesses provided oral evidence on the Victims and Witnesses of Crime Bill.

Connie Egan joined the meeting at 9.43am.

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

Aoife Finnegan left the meeting at 9.59am.

Patsy McGlone joined the meeting at 10.05am.

During the evidence session, the witnesses agreed to provide the he PSNI service policy on vulnerability, which includes the designated list of vulnerabilities from the National Police Chief's Council portfolio.

The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the witness and they left the meeting at 10.30am.

Agreed: That the meeting move to closed session to continue deliberations on the Criminal Justice (Sentencing etc) Bill.

4. Criminal Justice (Sentencing etc) Bill – Deliberations

Liz Marsh, Assembly Clerk, Bill Office, was in attendance to provide advice to the Committee.

The Committee discussed Part 6 and Clause 41 of Part 7 of the Criminal Justice (Sentencing etc) Bill.

Patsy McGlone left the meeting at 10.38am

The Committee asked the Bill Clerk to prepare a standalone misogyny aggravator, in line with the Committee's previous decision on division on 22 October 2026.

The Committee considered whether 'transgender identity group' should be added to the aggravators by reason of hostility at Clause 33.

The question was put:

> That the Committee is content to add an amendment to include 'transgender identity group' as an aggravator by hostility.

The Committee divided: Ayes: 3; Noes: 4

Ayes: Emma Sheerin, Connie Egan, Ciara Ferguson.

Noes: Paul Frew, Doug Beattie, Maurice Bradley, Brian Kingston.

The motion fell.

Patsy McGlone returned to the meeting at 10.47am.

Members also deliberated on a potential Committee amendment to increase the maximum tariff at Clause 41 of the Bill to "life" in relation to causing death or grievous bodily injury by dangerous driving or by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs.

The question was put:

> That the Committee is content to add an amendment at Clause 41 of the Bill to increase the maximum tariff for causing death or grievous bodily injury by dangerous driving or by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs from "14 years" to "life".

The Committee divided: Ayes: 5; Abstentions: 3

Ayes: Paul Frew, Doug Beattie, Maurice Bradley, Brian Kingston, Patsy McGlone.

Abstained: Emma Sheerin, Connie Egan, Ciara Ferguson.

The motion was carried.

5. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

Members were advised that the next meeting will take place on Thursday 12 November at 1.30pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.58am.

Paul Frew MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Justice
17 November 2026