Housing
Executive

Acting Chief Executive
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Ms Christine Darrah
Clerk to the Committee for Justice
Room 242
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast BT4 3XX

12th September 2014

Dear Ms Darrah

Proposed Amendments to the Justice Bill

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the Justice Bill. Of the six proposed amendments only two which relate to the provision of certificates and criminal records in Part 5 of the Bill touch upon matters any way relevant to the statutory functions and activities of the Housing Executive.

While the Housing Executive does not carry out any activities which fall within the meaning of a regulated activity for the purposes of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Order (NI) 2007, as amended by s 78 and Schedule 2 of the Personal Freedoms Act 2012, and is not a registered body in respect of the criminal records checks regime, it maintains an interest in effective protections for vulnerable persons in its capacity as a funder of supporting people funding to service providers providing advice and help to make it easier for vulnerable people to maintain their independence in their home. People can receive support in a hostel or in sheltered housing or other type of supported living or alternatively by way of a support service in their own home. In that role, the Housing Executive requires service providers to seek and maintain appropriate criminal record checks in respect of their employees and monitors compliance.

The Housing Executive supports the amendment to empower Access NI to provide information to the Disclosure and Barring Service to enable determination as to whether a person should be barred from working with vulnerable people. It agrees that this a technical amendment is needed as an additional safeguard for vulnerable persons to be protected from inappropriate persons being able to get to work with such groups of people and welcomes it as such.

Yours sincerely

Mags Lightbody
Acting Chief Executive