



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Justice Bill

Notice of Amendments tabled on
9 February 2026 for Consideration Stage

New Clause

Before clause 24 insert—

‘Minimum age of criminal responsibility

Minimum age of criminal responsibility

A24. For Article 3 of the Criminal Justice (Children) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (age of responsibility) substitute—

“Age of criminal responsibility

3.—(1) Subject to the exceptions in paragraph (2), a child under the age of 12 years shall not be charged with an offence.

(2) A child aged 10 years or over may be charged with murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, rape or assault by penetration.

(3) Nothing in this Article shall prevent the police from interviewing a child under the age of 12 years to seek information in connection with an offence, but only if consent to do so has been provided by a person who has parental responsibility for the child.

(4) The reference to “offence” in paragraph (3) includes any act or omission which, if committed by a person above the age of criminal responsibility, would constitute an offence.”’

Mr Doug Beattie

An amendment to the amendment inserting a new clause “Age of criminal responsibility: review”, tabled by Sian Mulholland on 30 September 2025

After subsection (1) insert—

‘(1A) The report must include the number of children under the age of 12 years in each year of the review period who have been—

- (a) arrested for an offence listed in Article 3(2) of the Criminal Justice (Children) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998,
- (b) charged with an offence referred to in paragraph (a), or
- (c) convicted of an offence referred to in paragraph (a).’

Mr Doug Beattie

An amendment to the amendment inserting a new clause “Age of criminal responsibility: review”, tabled by Sian Mulholland on 30 September 2025

In subsection (5), leave out “5” and insert “3”.

Mr Doug Beattie