



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

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Dear Mr Kelpie

Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill

The Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill was introduced into the Assembly on 5 July 2021 and it is anticipated that the Committee Stage of the Bill will commence in September 2021.

The Committee for Justice would welcome your views/comments on the content of the Bill which includes.

- Provisions arising from the Gillen Review of serious sexual offence cases to exclude the public from all serious sexual offence hearings and to introduce anonymity for defendants' pre-charge
- Provisions to give effect to the outcome of a review of the law on child sexual exploitation and sexual offences against children to include live streamed images in the definition of exploitation for sexual purposes and to create a new offence of adults masquerading as children online

- Provisions to create a new offence of up-skirting and down blousing alongside a number of other sex offence adjustments to ensure the law operates as intended in these areas
- Provisions to adjust the modern slavery strategy and improve services for potential victims of slavery and exploitation

Your written submission should be structured to address specific clauses of the Bill. If appropriate, it should include any amendments you wish to propose to the text of the Bill. Information regarding the Bill can be obtained from the Assembly's website <http://nia1.me/4nh> or can be provided on request by emailing the Committee at: JusticeSexualOffencesandTraffickingVictimsBill@niassembly.gov.uk.

The Department has also advised the Committee of four planned amendments to the Bill that the Minister is currently developing and the Committee would also welcome views on these. The proposed amendments cover the following:

- A legislative fix to re-instate four offences incorrectly removed into Schedule 2 of the Magistrates' Courts Order 1981 to allow for the summary prosecution of these indictable offences under Article 45 of that Order
- Abolition of the rough sex defence
- An extension to existing revenge porn provisions to include a threat of publication
- Provisions to widen the scope and strength of the current law on abuse of trust

Information provided by the NSPCC to the Committee on the 'Close the Loophole Campaign' to extend the Abuse of Trust legislation, the intention of the Minister to widen the scope to beyond the existing statutory settings and the position and recent developments in other jurisdictions and the Summary of Responses and Proposed

Way Forward produced by the Department of Justice following the consultation on 'Consent to Serious Harm for Sexual Gratification: Not a Defence' can also be accessed at: <http://nia1.me/4ni>

Written evidence should be submitted in Word format and preferably by email to: JusticeSexualOffencesandTraffickingVictimsBill@niassembly.gov.uk.

or, by post, to The Committee Clerk, Room 242, Parliament Buildings, Ballymiscaw, Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3XX.

The closing date for written submissions is **Friday 24 September 2021**.

Unless indicated otherwise it will be assumed that those submitting written evidence have no objection to it being made public by the Committee.

If you have any queries or require any further information please contact the Committee Clerk, Christine Darrah, on 028 9052 1629.

Yours sincerely

Clairita Frazer
Assistant Clerk, Committee for Justice