

## Ministerial Foreword

This consultation addresses a recommendation made by Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland that the Department of Justice should review how potential inadequacies in current legislation regarding the act of choking or strangulation by defendants could be addressed.

Once the devastating consequences of strangulation and the particular issues victims can face were brought to my attention, I commissioned a review to identify and address any issues with the current legislation on non-fatal strangulation, and areas which could benefit from policy development.

To take appropriate account of relevant legislative and judicial developments in other jurisdictions, locally and internationally, an expert stakeholder reference group and a senior level Review Board were established to assist with this work.

This consultation paper sets out relevant background information and research and seeks public and relevant stakeholder's views on the most appropriate way for the criminal justice system to respond to cases of non-fatal strangulation.

The consultation questions are designed to elicit your comments and views on a number of key policy issues. Together I believe we can ensure that there are no gaps in the law, and that this crime is taken seriously, and offenders are treated appropriately.

I encourage those with an interest to respond to this consultation and I look forward to considering your responses in determining the best way forward.

Naomi Long, MLA

Justice Minister