



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Máinnystrie O tha Laa

www.justice-ni.gov.uk

A consultation on measures to improve victim engagement in the parole process

This consultation begins on 23 February 2026.

This consultation ends on 22 May 2026.

Department of Justice

Safer Communities Directorate

Ministerial Foreword

As Minister of Justice, my priority is to work collaboratively with partners across government, policing, and the wider justice system to build a safer and fairer society for all. I am deeply committed to ensuring that victims of crime are treated with dignity, compassion and respect throughout their journey in the criminal justice system.

Whilst significant progress has been made in recent years to improve support for victims, we must continue to listen, learn and act on what matters to those directly impacted by crime.

My Department acknowledges that there is room for improvement. Victims have told us that they want to be heard, not only at the point of sentencing but throughout the offender's journey, including decisions about release. This consultation is an important step, as we work to strengthen victim engagement in the parole process and ensure victims' voices and experiences can help shape how justice is delivered. It builds on the changes introduced in 2022 allowing victims or other people to request a summary from the Parole Commissioners of a decision to release a person or keep them in custody.

I encourage everyone, especially victims, their families, support organisations and practitioners to engage with this consultation and share your views and the reasons for them. Your insights will help shape reforms that make the parole process more accessible inclusive and fair.

I would like to thank everyone who contributes to this consultation. Your input is vital to our efforts to improve the justice system so that we can continue to support the rehabilitation needs of those in our prisons whilst ensuring it delivers for victims, witnesses, and the wider community.

NAOMI LONG MLA
Minister of Justice

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Department of Justice wants to improve the experience of victims of crime throughout all stages of the criminal justice process. We recognise that this process does not end when an offender is sentenced to imprisonment. It includes the stage at which an offender is eligible for release on licence and the Parole Commissioners have to decide if the offender is safe to be released into the community.
- 1.2 Knowing that an offender may be released into the community can be a worrying and potentially re-traumatising experience for victims. This is especially the case where offenders have been through the parole review process a number of times before they are allowed to be released (or if they have been released and subsequently had their Licence revoked and been recalled back to prison). In these circumstances victims may feel unable to move forward whilst this cycle of reviews is ongoing.
- 1.3 The message to the Department of Justice has been clear – victims should have the option to be able to reflect their views and concerns to the Parole Commissioners. The measures in this consultation are aimed at enhancing victim engagement in the parole review process.
- 1.4 There has already been some work to open up the parole process. In 2022, the Department made changes to the rules which allow registered victims or other people to request a summary of reasons for a parole decision i.e. to release a person or keep them in custody.
- 1.5 When they conduct a Parole review, the Parole Commissioners have to operate in line with rules which are set by the Department of Justice. However, the rules also confer a degree of discretion to Commissioners as to how they run individual cases. We propose to change the rules to provide victims with greater opportunity to be engaged in the parole review process.

- 1.6 The applicable Rules are The Parole Commissioners' Rules (Northern Ireland) 2009¹. We have not included a draft set of new Rules in the consultation as we believe the first step is to take views on the proposals and how these would work in practice.

Registered victims and current engagement with parole process

- 1.7 For the purposes of this consultation, we define a victim as someone who has registered with the Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme (PRVIS)². This opt-in scheme provides information on certain people sentenced to time in prison and covers all types of cases which are reviewed by the Parole Commissioners.
- 1.8 We have provided more information about PRVIS in Annex A. We also explain what parole means; the different prison sentences it applies to; and how victims are currently engaged in the parole process. We would encourage you to read this before you submit your consultation response.

Summary of proposals

- 1.9 The proposed measures would:
- Introduce a presumption that a victim will be permitted to attend the first part of a hearing to make their representations directly to the Parole Commissioners.
 - Give the Department of Justice a clear power to apply to the Parole Commissioners for observers to attend the oral hearing. This would mean the Department (as one of the parties to the proceedings) could ask the Parole Commissioners if a victim can attend a hearing as an observer.

¹ The Rules are found at: [The Parole Commissioners' Rules \(Northern Ireland\) 2009](#)

A new Rule was introduced in 2022: [The Parole Commissioners' \(Amendment\) Rules \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#)

² More information on PRVIS can be found at [Victim Information Scheme | Probation Board for Northern Ireland](#)

- Allow a hearing to take place in public, where the Parole Commissioners consider that is in the interests of justice.
 - Require the Parole Commissioners to issue a summary of reasons for a decision to a victim within a two-week period of it being requested; and
 - place a statutory requirement on the Department of Justice to submit victims' representations to the Parole Commissioners.
- 1.10 The consultation also seeks views on the practicalities of increasing victims' engagement in the parole process. We are interested in whether guidance is needed; the type of support that victims will need if they are involved in parole proceedings; and how the Victims Information Scheme should support this work.
- 1.11 We recognise that every victim is different. Not everyone will want to participate in the parole review process. These measures are meant to help victims take part in parole proceedings, but only if they choose to do so.
- 1.12 It is also important to remember that the final decision on a victim's engagement in any parole review rests with the Parole Commissioners. They are an independent body and have to consider a range of factors when deciding if an offender is suitable for release. This includes may considering if victim involvement is appropriate.

Wider victim related work

- 1.13 The Department of Justice is engaged in other work which is intended to increase support for victims. Further information is given below on work which is linked to the parole process.

Pre-Release Testing

- 1.14 There has been a lot of public interest in pre-release testing of prisoners, particularly those who have been sentenced to life imprisonment.

- 1.15 Pre-release testing helps Parole Commissioners assess if someone is safe to be released into the community. This is a separate process managed by the Prison Service.
- 1.16 The Justice Minister has commissioned a review of current pre-release testing to identify any areas where improvements can be made.

Charlotte's Law

- 1.17 The Department of Justice is planning to change the law about the disclosure of information about the location of victims' remains in 'no body' cases.
- 1.18 The provisions are intended to encourage those who are suspected of, charged with and sentenced for a 'no-body' killing to give details of the location of their victims' remains or how the remains were disposed of.
- 1.19 This would mean that the offenders could potentially receive longer prison sentences or are denied parole if they fail to disclose the victim's remains.
- 1.20 It is intended that the legislative provision will be provided for in the Department's Sentencing Bill.

Victim's Charter/link with other victims' work

- 1.21 The Victim Charter sets out the entitlements around information and communication, services, and supports, that victims of crime in Northern Ireland can expect to receive from criminal justice organisations. The Charter also provides information about what to do should anyone feel their Charter rights are not being upheld.
- 1.22 A new Victims and Witnesses of Crime Strategy will be published in the new year. Its Vision is to increase confidence in the justice system by empowering and supporting all victims and witnesses with a trauma informed approach and the Mission Statement aims to achieve this by providing victims and witnesses, including children, young people and vulnerable users, with tailored support and

effective communication, in a transparent, rights compliant way. The strategy is organised around five pillars: support, communication and information, transparency and participation, rights and confidence, and children and young people, while the Action Plan will set out a detailed programme of work addressing the priority areas identified through engagement and consultation with victims, witnesses and representative organisations.

2. Proposal: Introduce a presumption that a victim will be permitted to attend the outset of a hearing to make their representations directly to the Parole Commissioners

Background

- 2.1 The Department of Justice refers a prisoner's case to the Parole Commissioners when it is due for review. At this stage, victims will be told that the prisoner is being considered for release, and they will be given the opportunity to make written submissions to the Parole Commissioners. These submissions are known as 'Representations'.
- 2.2 Representations allow the victim to explain the impact that the offence has had on them and their views on release. Victims can also request that conditions be applied to the offender upon release (for example, being excluded from a certain area). The Department of Justice includes any Representations in a dossier of information provided to the Parole Commissioners.
- 2.3 Where a victim wishes to attend a hearing to read their Representations, the Department of Justice will make an application to the Parole Commissioners for the victim to attend the hearing to do so. The Parole Commissioners will make the final decision on whether the victim can attend.
- 2.4 Hearings generally take place virtually (online) but may also be at a prison establishment. In cases to date, hearings have all been online and a Victim Liaison Officer (VLO) from PRVIS has supported victims whilst they read their representations from the PRVIS office.

Changes

- 2.5 We believe it is vital that victims have their voices heard directly by decision makers, including by the Parole Commissioners.
- 2.6 For this reason, we propose to introduce a presumption that a victim has the right to attend the opening of a hearing to read their representations directly to the Parole Commissioners.
- 2.7 The Parole Commissioners could only refuse such a request where it considered that it was not in the interests of justice. This is a high threshold and for this reason we expect that in most cases victims would be permitted by the Parole Commissioners to attend hearings to read their statements.
- 2.8 Although victims would be attending to read their representations in person, they could not be questioned or cross examined, by the Parole Commissioners, the offender/offender's legal representative or by the Department of Justice itself.
- 2.9 It should be noted that the offender retains the right to attend the hearing and cannot be excluded at the request of the victim. It is only in exceptional circumstances that information can be submitted by a victim on a confidential basis.

Questions

- 2.10 Do you agree that there should be a presumption that victims can make their representations directly to the Parole Commissioners at the outset of the hearing? Please give reasons for your answer.
- 2.11 Are there any practical or procedural issues that need taken into consideration?
- 2.12 Do you have any other comments on this proposal?

3. Proposal: Allow the Department of Justice to apply to the Parole Commissioners for observers attend the oral hearing.

Background

- 3.1 Some victims have expressed an interest in observing a parole hearing to see how the offender's case is being reviewed.
- 3.2 Under the current framework, the Chairperson of a panel can admit anyone to an oral hearing on any terms and conditions as they consider appropriate. This is quite a general power in the rules and to date it has not been used in respect of victim attendance at hearings.
- 3.3 In England and Wales, the Ministry of Justice can apply to the Parole Board for an observer to attend a hearing. This means that the Ministry of Justice can make an application for a victim to attend a hearing to observe proceedings associated with their case.
- 3.4 We therefore propose to make clear in the rules that the Department of Justice can apply for an observer to accompany the Department of Justice to attend a hearing. This provision would be used where a victim has indicated that they wish to attend a hearing as an observer. The Department would apply to the Parole Commissioners for the victim to attend a parole hearing. It is important to remember that the prisoner will be made aware of this application and may object to the observer attending.
- 3.5 Victims attending as observers would have to respect the confidentiality of what is discussed within the proceedings and would have to sign a confidentiality agreement. They would not be able to actively participate in the hearing in any way. They would not receive case papers.

- 3.6 This rule change would extend to prisoners too. Their representatives could request that observers attend the hearing. The final decision on attendance would remain a matter for the Parole Commissioners. The Parole Commissioners could decide that observers should only be able to observe part of the proceedings.
- 3.7 We acknowledge that attending a hearing may give victims an insight into the parole review process. It may also help them to understand the factors that are taken into account when assessing current risk and to see how the Parole Commissioners reach decisions on suitability for release.
- 3.8 However, this has to be balanced against the fact that attending a hearing as an observer could be re-traumatising. Any victims who wanted to attend a hearing would have to carefully consider if that is the right decision for them.

Questions

- 3.9 Do you agree that victims should have the opportunity to ask to attend parole review hearings? Please give reasons for your answer.
- 3.10 Are there any practical and procedural issues to be taken into account, to support victims attending as observers?
- 3.11 Do you have any comments on how victims observing hearings should be supported throughout this process and on the potential for re-traumatisation?

4. Proposal: Public and private hearings and locations

Background

- 4.1 Generally speaking, parole hearings are held in private. This is important for a number of reasons. It protects the security of everyone involved in the hearing process. It means that witnesses – including prisoners - can freely and openly communicate with the Parole Commissioners when giving their evidence.
- 4.2 However, there may be cases where victims, members of the public or other organisations consider that it is in the interests of justice for a hearing to be held in public. This may be, for example, where there are special features in the case setting it apart from others which indicate that a public hearing is justified. This is the position in England and Wales where anyone can apply to listen to or watch the proceedings. In that jurisdiction, it is for the Parole Board to determine if a hearing should be held in public.

Changes

- 4.3 We are inviting views on making similar provision in Northern Ireland. This would mean that the Parole Commissioners could decide to hold a hearing in public if they consider that it is in the interests of justice to do so. The Parole Commissioners could make these decisions on their own initiative or if anyone applies to them asking for a hearing to be public. Likewise, the Parole Commissioners could decide to keep the proceedings private if they consider that it is not in the interests of justice. They could also decide to run parts of the hearing in public and parts of the hearing in private.
- 4.4 It is important to consider that the context in Northern Ireland is different to other jurisdictions within the UK. There is a smaller population in Northern Ireland, a history of conflict and, in some cases, there can be challenges around keeping

victims and witnesses safe³. For these reasons, we are interested in views on how this proposal for public hearings would work in practice and if there are any specific local implications.

Questions

- 4.5 Do you consider that there should be provision for the Parole Commissioners to allow public hearings? Please give reasons for your answer.
- 4.6 If so, what do you consider this would add to existing arrangements, including in terms of assisting victims?
- 4.7 Are there any practical or procedural issues you would like to give views on?

³ For example, in certain circumstances, trials in Northern Ireland may take place without a jury: [Consultation response on Non-Jury Trials in Northern Ireland, May 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

5. Proposal: Place a statutory requirement on the Department of Justice to submit victims' representations to the Parole Commissioners

Background

- 5.1 Registered victims are made aware when a prisoner's case is coming up for parole review. If they have prepared representations, the Department of Justice will include these in the papers it provides to the Parole Commissioners.
- 5.2 Whilst this is standard practice, we consider that it would be helpful to make this a statutory obligation on the Department. This will enshrine the right of victims to have their representations submitted as part of the parole review process.
- 5.3 We therefore propose to change the rules to make clear that victims' written representations must be included in the information and reports submitted by the Department of Justice to the Parole Commissioners.

Question

- 5.4 Do you agree that there should be a statutory obligation on the Department of Justice to submit victims' representations to the Parole Commissioners? Please provide reasons for your answer.

6. Proposal: set a time limit within which the Parole Commissioners must produce a summary of reasons for a decision

Background

- 6.1 Victims or other persons can ask the Parole Commissioners to produce a summary of reasons for a decision following an oral hearing in a particular prisoner's case. This is in line with Rule 22A of the Rules, which was introduced in 2022. The Parole Commissioners must produce this unless there are exceptional reasons not to disclose a summary.
- 6.2 Summaries must be requested within six months of the decision. The Parole Commissioners must produce a summary unless there are exceptional reasons not to disclose a summary.
- 6.3 We understand that, in the 2024/25 reporting year, nine summaries⁴ have been produced at the request of victims.
- 6.4 There is no time limit on when summaries have to be produced. We are also unaware of any issues around victims receiving these in a timely manner. However, we consider that placing a time limit on producing a summary of reasons would give victims the right to receive information as swiftly as possible after they request it.
- 6.5 We propose that a summary of reasons must be produced within a maximum period of two weeks from the point of request. This timeframe will allow the Parole Commissioners to weigh up the information that should be included in a summary and take into account any issues around disclosing details relating to a hearing.

⁴ [Annual Report 2024/25 | Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland](#)

Questions

- 6.6 Do you agree that the rules should set a time limit for the Parole Commissioners to produce a summary of reasons for a decision? Please provide reasons for your answer. Do you agree that a two-week period is reasonable?

7. Practical Implications

- 7.1 These proposed reforms would require some shifts in practice and culture. To effectively implement these potential measures, we are interested in your views on a number of practicalities.

Operational Guidance and Consistency

- 7.2 If the proposals are brought forward, there may be a need for the development of operational guidance for all organisations involved, including the Parole Commissioners, the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Department of Justice, the Victim Information Unit (VIU), and other relevant justice partners.

- 7.3 This guidance could potentially cover:

- Procedures for facilitating victim attendance at hearings (both when attending to read representations and attending as observers).
- Managing confidentiality and safeguarding concerns, particularly in cases involving observers or public hearings.
- Consistent application of the new rules across cases to ensure fairness and transparency.

- 7.4 Do you agree with the need for guidance? If so, what should it cover, and which organisations should it apply to?

Training and Awareness

- 7.5 Staff across agencies may need training to understand any new procedures and to engage with victims in a trauma-informed, respectful, and legally compliant manner. Specific training areas may include:

- Supporting victims who attend hearings.
- Managing sensitive information and confidentiality.
- Understanding the emotional impact of victim participation and how to mitigate re-traumatisation.

- 7.6 Do you agree with the need for training and awareness? If so, what should it cover and how should it be delivered?

Victim Support and Communication

- 7.7 Victims will require clear, accessible information about their rights and options under any new framework. The PBNI Victim Information Unit (VIU) play a central role as they manage the existing Victim Information Schemes and support the registered victim throughout the parole process:
- Preparing victims for participation or observation.
 - Providing emotional and practical support before, during, and after hearings.
 - Ensuring victims understand the implications of attending hearings, including the presence of the offender and the limits of their role.
- 7.8 Do you have any comments on how victims should be supported and communicated with during the parole process.

Other considerations

- 7.9 We welcome any other comments on victim engagement in the parole process.

8. Responding to the Consultation

- 8.1 Responses to the consultation questions can be made using the <https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/doj/victim-engagement-in-the-parole-process>
- 8.2 If you are unable to respond using the online response form, you can email your response to the following address: ppbconsultationresponses@justice-ni.gov.uk or you can write to us at: Public Protection Branch, Community Safety Division, Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate, Belfast BT4 3SJ.
- 8.3 The consultation will be open on 23 February 2026. Please ensure that consultation responses are received by 11:59pm on the closing date of 22 May 2026.
- 8.4 Should you have any queries about this consultation, please contact Public Protection Branch, using the email or postal details above.

Alternative Formats

- 8.5 Copies of the document in alternative formats (including Braille, large print etc.) can be made available on request. If it would assist you to access the document in an alternative format or language other than English, please let us know and we will do our best to assist you.

What happens next?

- 8.6 Following the closure of the consultation on 22 May 2026, all responses will be analysed and used to inform the development of legislative proposals. A summary of responses and next steps will be published and will be made available on the Department's website.
- 8.7 For further detail on Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Consultation Responses please refer to Annex B.

9. Impact assessments

Equality

- 9.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires all public authorities in Northern Ireland to have due regard to equality of opportunity between the nine equality categories and have regard to promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. The Department is fully committed to fulfilling its Section 75 obligations on the promotion of equality of opportunity, good relations and meeting legislative requirements in Northern Ireland.
- 9.2 The proposals being consulted upon have been subjected to an Equality Impact Screening. There have been no equality issues identified, and the equality screening has not identified any Section 75 impacts at this stage. The completed equality screening document is available at DoJ Website.

Rural Needs

- 9.3 The Department considered the impact of the proposals outlined in this paper on rural communities compared to urban communities. It has identified that there would be no significant adverse impact on those living in rural areas.

10. Complaints

- 10.1 If you have any complaints or concerns about this consultation process, please submit your complaint by email to Governance.Unit@justice-ni.gov.uk

11. Annex A: What is the parole review process?

What do we mean by parole?

11.1 Parole means some prisoners may be released from prison to complete the remainder of their sentence in the community. Prisoners released into the community on parole are managed and supervised by the Probation Board Northern Ireland (PBNI).

11.2 Not every prisoner is eligible to apply for parole. It only applies to prisoners serving:

- A **Life Sentence** - A sentence imposed for the most serious offences, like murder. No release date is set, but a tariff is imposed by the Judge which details the minimum period the offender must serve in custody. After this minimum period is served the Parole Commissioners can consider release on a Life Licence. If release is directed the offender remains on licence for life.
- An **Indeterminate Custodial Sentence (ICS)** - A sentence imposed for the most serious sexual and violent offences. They are similar to a Life Sentence in that no release date is set, but a tariff is imposed by the Judge which sets the minimum period the offender must serve in custody. After this minimum period is served the Parole Commissioners can consider release on licence. After 10 years on licence, an offender can apply to the Parole Commissioners to consider if it is necessary to keep the conditions.
- An **Extended Custodial Sentence (ECS)** - A sentence imposed for serious violent or sexual offences. It involves a prison term, followed by a period of supervised release in the community on licence. The prisoner can be considered for release on licence by the Parole Commissioners at the half-way point of the prison term.
- A **Terrorist Sentence (TS)** - This sentence can be applied to terrorist offenders. Offenders can be considered for release after serving two-thirds of their prison term, but only if the Parole Commissioners believe

they no longer pose a threat. If released, they will be supervised in the community on licence for a fixed period to ensure public safety.

11.3 Prisoners serving other types of sentences are not entitled to parole and are instead released automatically when the custodial element of their sentence ends. This includes prisoners serving a Determinate Custodial Sentence, who will only be considered for parole if they have had their licence revoked and been recalled to custody.

Who decides if a prisoner should be released on parole?

11.4 The Parole Commissioners are an independent body of experienced professionals who decide if prisoners can be released on licence. They decide if a prisoner can be released by assessing if the risk posed by the prisoner can be safely managed in the community.

11.5 The [Parole Commissioners Rules 2009](#) provide PCNI with the legislative framework to complete their duties.

What is involved in the Parole review process?

11.6 The parole process is in two stages. Initially, a Single Commissioner reviews an application based on a set of papers⁵. If the Commissioner decides the prisoner should not be released, the prisoner can then request an oral hearing is convened to consider their case.

11.7 The parole review is not a re-trial of the prisoner for the original offence but an assessment of the current risk that prisoner poses in the community if released.

11.8 A prisoner can have their case reviewed multiple times. If release is refused, the prisoner's case will be re-referred to the Parole Commissioners to consider

⁵The Dossier contains information relating to the offence for which the prisoner is serving their sentence, their criminal history, reports on their conduct and behaviour whilst in prison custody, health and psychology reports, risk assessments on their likelihood of re-offending and potential risk to the public if released as well as any plans for release.

release at a later date. There is usually a period of at least six months between case reviews.

What is an Oral Hearing?

11.9 An Oral Hearing involves a Panel of two or three Commissioners hearing oral evidence to assess a prisoner's suitability for release.

11.10 The hearing includes the prisoner and their legal representative. It usually includes representatives from the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) who give a view on the prisoner's suitability for release.

What happens at the oral hearing?

11.11 The Panel hears evidence from all parties and may ask questions to help inform their decision.

11.12 Hearings are typically held online. The proceedings are private and usually last around two hours.

Hearing Outcome

11.13 Within seven days, the Panel's written decision is issued. If the decision is 'not for release' the Panel will recommend when the prisoner's case should be referred back for a further review.

11.14 If the Panel decides the prisoner should be released, a probation officer will manage and supervise the prisoner once they leave prison. The prisoner is required to adhere to the conditions set out in their licence.

Registered Victims Entitlements

11.15 A victim in Northern Ireland can register to receive and give information about the person who committed a crime against them if they are in prison, hospital or on probation.

11.16 There are three victim information schemes⁶. If the person who has offended has been:

- sentenced to at least 6 months in prison – they can register for the Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme (PRVIS).
- given probation – they can register for the Probation Board Victim Information Scheme.
- given a hospital restriction order – they can register for the Mentally Disordered Offenders Victim Information Scheme.

11.17 A registered victim has rights throughout the parole process, specifically:

- They can find out a prisoner's release date and when they apply for parole.
- They can request specific conditions are included in any periods of Pre Release Testing as well as on any release licence. The final decision on their inclusion will lie with the respective agency with responsibility for that process.
- They can submit written representations which will form part of the set of papers reviewed by the Single Commissioner in the first stage of the parole review process. This allows the victim to write down their thoughts and feelings about how the crime has affected them and inform the Panel of any concerns they have.
- If the offender's parole application reaches Oral Hearing, the victim can also apply to attend the hearing to read out their written representations. The Department of Justice can request this on their behalf, but the Parole Panel will decide whether they are allowed to attend. Information about the hearing, including names of any persons involved are to be treated as confidential.
- Whether or not a victim submits representations and/or applies to attend the oral hearing to read it, they will be informed of the Panel's decision to release or not release the prisoner. The victim can also apply to be provided with a written summary of the reason for the decision if this request is completed within 6 months of the hearing.

⁶ [Victim Information Scheme | Probation Board for Northern Ireland](#)

12. Annex B: Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Consultation Responses

- 12.1 For this consultation, we may publish all responses except for those where the respondent indicates that they are an individual acting in a private capacity (e.g. a member of the public). All responses from organisations and individuals responding in a professional capacity will be published. We will remove email addresses and telephone numbers from these responses; but apart from this, we will publish them in full. For more information about what we do with personal data please see our consultation privacy notice.
- 12.2 Your response, and all other responses to this consultation, may also be disclosed on request in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR); however all disclosures will be in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679.
- 12.3 If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential, so that this may be considered if the Department should receive a request for the information under the FOIA or EIR.

Privacy Notice – Consultations (DoJ)

- 12.4 Data Controller Name: Department of Justice (DoJ) Address: Castle Buildings, Stormont, BELFAST, BT4 3SJ Email: ppbconsultationresponses@justice-ni.gov.uk
- 12.5 Data Protection Officer Name: DoJ Data Protection Officer Email: DataProtectionOfficer@justice-ni.gov.uk
- 12.6 Being transparent and providing accessible information to individuals about how we may use personal data is a key element of the [Data Protection Act \(DPA\)](#) and the [EU General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR). The

Department of Justice (DoJ) is committed to building trust and confidence in our ability to process your personal information and protect your privacy.

Purpose for processing

- 12.7 We will process personal data provided in response to consultations for the purpose of informing the development of our policy, guidance, or other regulatory work in the subject area of the request for views. We will publish a summary of the consultation responses and, in some cases, the responses themselves but these will not contain any personal data. We will not publish the names or contact details of respondents but will include the names of organisations responding.
- 12.8 If you have indicated that you would be interested in contributing to further Department work on the subject matter covered by the consultation, then we might process your contact details to get in touch with you.

Lawful basis for processing

- 12.9 The lawful basis we are relying on to process your personal data is Article 6(1)(e) of the GDPR, which allows us to process personal data when this is necessary for the performance of our public tasks in our capacity as a Government Department.
- 12.10 We will only process any special category personal data you provide, which reveals racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious belief, health or sexual life/orientation when it is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest under Article 9(2)(g) of the GDPR, in the exercise of the function of the department, and to monitor equality.

How will your information be used and shared?

- 12.11 We process the information internally for the above stated purpose. We don't intend to share your personal data with any third party. Any specific requests from a third party for us to share your personal data with them will be dealt with in accordance the provisions of the data protection laws.

How long will we keep your information?

12.12 We will retain consultation response information until our work on the subject matter of the consultation is complete, and in line with the Department's approved Retention and Disposal Schedule [DoJ Retention & Disposal Schedule](#).

What are your rights?

12.13 You have the right to obtain confirmation that your data is being [processed](#), and [access your personal data](#).

12.14 You are entitled to have personal data [rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete](#).

12.15 You have a right to have personal data [erased and to prevent processing](#), in specific circumstances.

12.16 You have the right to ['block' or suppress processing](#) of personal data, in specific circumstances.

12.17 You have the right to [data portability](#), in specific circumstances.

12.18 You have the right to [object to the processing](#), in specific circumstances

12.19 You have rights in relation to [automated decision making and profiling](#).

How to complain if you are not happy with how we process your personal information

12.20 If you wish to request access, object or raise a complaint about how we have handled your data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer using the details above.

12.21 If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are not processing your personal data in accordance with the law, you can complain to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow Cheshire

SK9 5AF

casework@ico.org.uk