



Victims' Commissioners

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13:02:26

Part-time Commission debated

Part-time members could be appointed to the Victims' Commission, the Assembly heard today.

Greater flexibility is needed to help the bereaved and injured emerge from the conflict, the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister said.

The Human Rights Commission has a chief commissioner and a number of part-time members, but Sinn Fein has opposed moves to grant senior status to one member of the Victims' Commission.

OFMDFM Junior Minister Jeffrey Donaldson (DUP, Lagan Valley) said: "The needs of victims and survivors will change and the new structures of support will develop.

"The legislation is drafted in a way that gives the flexibility to move away from four full-time commissioners if necessary.

"The legislation as drafted would allow for the possibility in future of a commission that could be made up of a number of part-time commissioners with part-time remuneration rather than full-time commissioners if required."

MLAs were debating an amendment limiting the body to four members during the consideration stage of the Commission for Victims and Survivors Bill.

Sinn Fein has opposed calls for a chief appointee in the past.

The consideration stage of the bill was delayed twice because of negotiations between Sinn Fein and the DUP about the distribution of powers, the decision making process and the issue of staff with conflict-related convictions.

There are no immediate plans to change the make-up of the commission.

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