1. Do you agree with the proposal in the Bill to repeal the 2012 Act? What are your reasons for coming to this view?

Yes.

From a philosophical standpoint the act itself is fundamentally flawed and based on the incorrect idea that offense is something that can be quantified in black and white/right and wrong as “offense” is such a broad and vague concept that to apply simple good and bad connotations to it is quite frankly ridiculous.

From a practical point of view this act has been used quite simply as a tool to dictate what is deemed to be socially and politically acceptable in the eyes of a government which goes against the supposed rights to free speech that we base our political and personal discussions on.

2. Did you support the original legislation?

No.

3. Do you consider that other existing provisions of criminal law are sufficient to prosecute offensive behaviour related to football which leads to public disorder? If so, could you specify the criminal law provisions? Or does repeal of section 1 risk creating a gap in the criminal law

Yes, I feel that the laws covering Breach of the Peace cover any forms of socially unacceptable behaviour in and out of football as they cover what is considered to be unacceptable by law without infringing on the rights of expression of those being arrested or those under suspicion of breaking the law.

4. Do you have a view on the focus of section 1 of the 2012 Act, which criminalises behaviour surrounding watching, attending or travelling to or from football matches, which may not be criminalised in other settings?

It is my view that football fans should not be treated in a different manner legally or in any way to the rest of society. They imply by being separate from the “standard” laws that football fans are to be treated as different and in a negative manner. At best they are misguided at worst they are discriminatory.

5. Do you have a view on the proposed transitional arrangements in the Bill: that there should be no further convictions for section 1 and 6 offences from the date on which the repeal of those offences takes effect; and that the police will cease issuing fixed penalty notices at least from the point at which the Bill is passed?
The act along with all convictions and penalties should be ceased and quashed respectively with immediate effect. The Bill and its effects, such as the worry/court time/cost/convictions and subsequent knock on effects to jobs, relationships and families have been created and put into practice on a faulty pretence.

The law itself was rushed and brought in to quell political dissent on the back of manufactured hysteria and now is the time to end it.

6. To what extent do you consider that the 2012 Act has assisted in tackling sectarianism?

Not one iota, sectarianism will not be solved in clamping down on freedom of expression.

Only through education of the youth will there ever be a change in the divisions in society.

10 August 2017