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

No, I do not want to see this legislation repealed, because I feel there has been improvement in behaviour at matches.

2. Did you support the original legislation?

Yes, and it has been effective as a deterrent.

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?

I feel that football matches, because of ingrained historical sectarianism, have to have specific mention.

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?

Other settings are covered for sectarianism. Football matches have proven to be an especially inflammatory setting.

5. Do you consider that other existing provisions of criminal law are sufficient to prosecute threats made with the intent of causing a person or persons fear or alarm or inciting religious hatred? If so, could you specify the criminal law provisions? Or does repeal of section 6 risk creating a gap in the criminal law?

6. 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?

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

It has provided a clear focus on sectarian singing, which ramps up aggression, and should have nothing to do with sport. It is intimidating, and a stain on society in these days. There can be no tolerance, or grey areas.

Valerie Rooney
6 July 2017