Written submission from Brian Cantwell

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, I think it an unjust law brought in without cross party consultation

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 as there were other laws already in place (breach of the peace and Section 74).

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?
   To take but one of any number of examples that demonstrate the idiocy of this bill, consider the fact that a song sung by football supporters could be considered offensive but were the same song sung by rugby supporters at Murrayfield it would not be reckoned offensive. Remember too, that ministers were initially not sure if singing the national anthem might be grounds for arrest and prosecution.

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?
   Section 6 has hardly been used since the act came in.

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?
   The act should be axed with immediate effect and all convictions should be quashed.
7. To what extent do you consider that the 2012 Act has assisted in tackling sectarianism?

   None whatsoever.

Brian Cantwell
11 August 2017