

NON FATAL STRANGULATION

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES AND WAY FORWARD

The consultation ran from 7 July 2021 until 24 September 2021

November 2021



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Máinnstríe O tha Laa

Foreword

This consultation arose out of a recommendation made by Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, that the Department of Justice should review how potential inadequacies in current legislation regarding the act of choking or strangulation by defendants could be addressed.

The consultation paper provided background information and research, highlighting the unique problems associated with strangulation and the difficulties surrounding existing legislation.

Of key importance, the consultation asked whether or not a new offence of non-fatal strangulation is needed, and if so, what the appropriate sentences for the offence should be.

I am grateful to those of you who took time to respond to the consultation and for your views. Responses were thoughtful and considered. There was almost unanimous support for change, and a number of helpful suggestions were made which have been taken into account in developing our thinking.

This document summarises the responses received and sets out my decisions and proposed way forward.

This report, together with a transcript of all responses received can be seen on the Department of Justice website at: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-non-fatal-strangulation>

NAOMI LONG

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE

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Introduction

1. The difficulties presented by the existing offence of strangulation were detailed in the consultation paper. To be successfully prosecuted it requires proof of intention to commit another serious offence. Such proof is frequently unavailable and consequently strangulation is often charged as an aggravating factor in the prosecution of an alternative, lesser offence.
2. This approach fails to capture the prevalence of strangulation and to recognise its unique nature; it means that the offence may not be appropriately sentenced; and makes it difficult for the courts and police to identify those offenders who use strangulation as a means of exercising control or intimidation and who pose a significant risk of committing further more serious offences.
3. The consultation sought views on the adequacy of current legislation. The following is an overview of the responses received and recommendations going forward. Annex A provides a summarised table of the responses and Minister's decisions.

Question 1: Do you think the law in Northern Ireland is sufficient as it stands?

- 1 respondent answered "yes".
 - 24 respondents answered "no".
 - 0 respondents did not answer this question.
4. The overwhelming majority of respondents considered the current law is not sufficient. Those in favour of change expressed the view that the seriousness of the offence must be recognised. The features of control and coercion associated with strangulation, and the increased risk of further serious offending were highlighted.
 5. There was significant concern around the use of alternative offences and their related penalties. Criticisms included that the offence charged prevents identification of strangulation as part of the offending conduct, with the result that there is an increased risk that police, prosecutors and the courts could miss the 'red flags' for future offending; the harm caused, whether physical or psychological or both, is often not reflected adequately in sentence; and the available sentence may not fully address the nature of an offence which includes strangulation.
 6. Reference was made to the substantial research available which suggests that strangulation is a recognised precursor to future homicide; that it is a highly gendered crime; the primal fear it engenders; and that, while even minimal force for a few seconds can significantly increase the risk of death over the next 24

hours, incidents of non-fatal strangulation are often accompanied by a lack of visible injury.

7. Many respondents concurred with District Judge McElholm's comments that:

"Choking is prosecuted as an assault, and that is woefully inadequate, as it only exists in legislation in some obscure reference in the 1861 Offences Against The Person Act. The maximum sentence is six months, which is wholly inadequate and inappropriate. The time has long passed when specific offences like this which involve choking, smothering and strangulation should be brought as indictable-only offences."

8. The development of new strangulation offences in other countries was noted. A number of respondents considered the domestic abuse offence (introduced by the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021), but noted that it could not be used to deal with all cases of strangulation due to the requirements for a course of abusive conduct and a personal connection between the parties.
9. Respondents felt that a specific offence with appropriate sanctions would make the harm and dangers of non-fatal strangulation and the appropriate action by law enforcement "crystal clear".

Response and Way Forward

10. The Minister is grateful to those who responded to this consultation.
11. The responses eloquently underlined gaps within the current legislation. They also highlighted the importance of wider understanding of the issues associated with strangulation, clear recording, and appropriate sentencing. Together, a compelling case for a change in the law was made.
12. The specific proposals for change are detailed in the following sections.

Question 2: Which of the following is your preferred option – (a) no change; (b) make strangulation a statutory aggravating factor to be taken into account by the courts when sentencing for any offence; (c) create a new stand-alone offence of non-fatal strangulation with appropriate maximum sentence; or (d) other?

- 0 respondents answered (a).
- 2 respondents answered (b).
- 23 respondents answered (c).
- 0 respondents answered (d).

13. The responses demonstrated a strong preference to create a new stand-alone offence of non-fatal strangulation with appropriate maximum sentence.
14. Answers highlighted the need to ensure clarity for victims, police, legal professionals and perpetrators; to increase protection for victims; and to illustrate the extent and seriousness of this problem.
15. Respondents in support of new legislation expressed their views that a stand-alone offence has potential to:
 - cover situations where offending behaviour cannot be appropriately prosecuted;
 - allow the act of strangulation to be expressly investigated, prosecuted and recorded; consequently, allowing the police service to allocate resources appropriately;
 - assist in assessing risk by identifying serious offenders;
 - aid measures such as the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme;
 - better reflect the unique harm and seriousness related to the act of strangulation;
 - raise awareness of the risks associated with strangulation;
 - send a strong message that strangulation is not a minor crime; and
 - improve how we meet our human rights commitments.
16. A number of respondents commented that any new law must be clear. A definition would be needed, to cover all forms of vital restriction of blood-flow or air intake. Any such definition should make clear the distinction between: strangulation (external pressure to the major arteries in the neck and windpipe); suffocation or asphyxiation (depriving air intake normally by covering the nose and mouth); and choking (blocking the airway by matter lodged in the throat).
17. It was suggested that the proposed new strangulation legislation should include an element that protects against gender-based violence, using the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, United Nations Convention Against Torture and Istanbul Convention as a guide.
18. The issue of consent was raised. Respondents were of the view that claims of the victim's consent should not be recognised as a defence to a charge of strangulation. This was consistent with similar comments made in response to the Department's recent related consultation: "Consent to Serious Harm for Sexual Gratification: Not a Defence".

19. Two respondents from an academic discipline each provided a detailed critique of the strangulation offence created in the English Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and warned against a direct copy, having identified potential shortcomings.
20. Neither of the respondents who were in favour of making strangulation a statutory aggravating factor, to be taken into account by the courts when sentencing for any offence, provided reasons for their answer.
21. A factor militating against the creation of a statutory aggravating factor was highlighted by one respondent, who noted that attempted strangulation is already identified in sentencing guidance as an aggravating factor in assault cases. Further codification would mean no substantive change, meaning the issues currently faced by the criminal justice system in responding to these types of assault would remain.
22. It was also noted that the creation of aggravating factors does not allow for any increase in the maximum penalty for the offence charged; and that, as aggravation can only be considered by the court once the main offence has been proved, there is a risk that the element of strangulation may not always be dealt with.

Response and Way Forward

23. The Minister is in agreement with the majority view that a new stand-alone offence should be created, with appropriate definitions and penalties.
24. As well as allowing recognition by the criminal justice system of the particular nature of strangulation, this will pave the way for awareness raising and send an important public message as to the seriousness of the offence.
25. The issue of consent is a difficult one. The practice of consensual strangulation in non-abusive sexual relationships is recognised; and private human rights must be respected. The recent consultation on consent to serious harm for sexual gratification resulted in a decision that consent would not be a defence where serious harm resulted.
26. The Department considers a consistent approach must be applied. Accordingly, the defence should only be outlawed in relation to strangulation which results in serious harm. Further detail in this regard is set out below.

Question 3: If a new strangulation offence is developed, should it be capable of being tried in the magistrates' courts and in the Crown Court?

- 19 respondents answered "yes".
- 5 respondents answered "no".
- 1 respondent did not answer this question.

27. The great majority of respondents agreed that if a new strangulation offence was introduced it should be capable of being tried in both the magistrates' courts and in the Crown Court. Those in favour of this approach commented:
- a 'hybrid' approach allows the prosecution flexibility to deal with the offence in the appropriate court venue, capturing all instances of the offence;
 - having a summary offence allows data capture in lower level cases, increasing public protection;
 - this would allow for extended time limits for victims to seek justice in the lower level cases, as the 6 month limit for summary prosecution does not apply to cases which can also be tried in the Crown Court;
 - enabling cases to be dealt with in the magistrates' courts should offer a swifter route to hearing and disposal for less serious cases - welcome from a victim's perspective, as lengthy processes can re-traumatise victims. The wider range of courts might encourage more reporting; and
 - this hybrid approach may assist in ensuring prosecutions at all levels: A Crown Court only approach might leave many cases still to be prosecuted as common assault or assault occasioning actual bodily harm. This would be counter-intuitive and would deprive us of valuable data about the prevalence of non-fatal strangulation in Northern Ireland.
28. Those not favouring a hybrid approach stated that:
- a new offence should only be dealt with in the Crown Court to reflect the seriousness of the offence;
 - the sentencing jurisdiction of the magistrates' courts is too low;
 - the opportunity for appeal of magistrates' courts convictions is undesirable as victims may be further traumatised; and
 - a summary offence would deprive the victim of the potential to go to the Crown Court, where the case would have more resources and attention compared to a case in the magistrates' courts.

Response and Way Forward

29. The Minister agrees with the majority of respondents that a new offence should be a hybrid one, that is triable either in the magistrates' courts or in the Crown Court.
30. While all cases are serious, this approach would ensure that those not meeting the threshold for Crown Court prosecution could still be dealt with, charged as strangulation.

31. This would align with the approach taken for certain other serious offences which can be tried in either court. Examples include: assault occasioning actual bodily harm; assault inflicting bodily injury, with or without a weapon; and threats to kill.
32. This approach would also ensure better recording and could result in earlier identification of potentially dangerous offenders.
33. Providing that a higher than normal maximum sentence for the magistrates' courts is created for these cases (see below), there will be appropriate sentencing powers irrespective of the court selected for hearing.

Question 4: If a new offence could be tried in the magistrates' courts should the maximum sentence be (a) 6 months; (b) 12 months; or (c) 2 years?

- 0 respondents answered (a) 6 months;
 - 0 respondent answered (b) 12 months;
 - 17 respondents answered (c) 2 years;
 - 8 respondents did not answer this question.
34. The majority of respondents expressed the view that if a new offence could be tried in the magistrates' courts the current normal maximum sentence of 6 months is inadequate and should be increased to 2 years.
 35. It was noted that 2 years:
 - should be considered given the gravity of the offence and the outcomes of strangulation both in terms of physical and psychological harm; and
 - would give a clear message that the courts and society take non-fatal strangulation seriously and recognise its dangerousness and impact on victims.
 36. One respondent proposed an approach of a normal maximum of 12 months, but with provision for a 2 year maximum in the most serious of cases tried in the magistrates' courts.

Response and Way Forward

37. The Minister agrees that non-fatal strangulation is an offence of such a nature as to merit a higher maximum sentence when tried in the magistrates' courts than the normal 6 month imprisonment maximum.

38. Given the range of circumstances in which it can occur and the widely varying degrees of harm that can result, it is considered that non-fatal strangulation is an exceptional offence which merits an exceptional sentencing provision.
39. To reflect this, it is decided that the maximum sentence in the magistrates' courts should be set at 2 years imprisonment. It will, of course, be a matter for the independent judiciary to decide what sentence within this limit is appropriate in each individual case.

Question 5: If a new offence could be tried in the Crown Court, should the maximum sentence be (a) 5 years; (b) 7 years; or (c) other?

- 0 respondents answered (a) 5 years;
 - 20 respondents answered (b) 7 years;
 - 4 respondents answered (c) other;
 - 1 respondent did not answer this question.
40. The vast majority of respondents stated that if a new offence could be tried in the Crown Court the maximum sentence should be 7 years as:
- this would allow for appropriate sentencing reflective of both the physical and psychological harm that can be inflicted from strangulation either on an isolated incident or through repeated prolonged abuse;
 - strangulation is a strong indicator of possible future homicide. On this basis there is a case for a maximum sentence equivalent to the offence of assault occasioning actual bodily harm (one of the alternative charges currently used); and
 - the maximum sentence should be enough to deter offending, to protect victims and to make offenders recognise the seriousness of the offence.
41. The respondent who answered "other" commented that the behaviour and the harm caused has the potential to be the equivalent of an offence under section 18 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 (causing grievous bodily harm with intent). As such that respondent considered it should have the same maximum sentence (a life sentence).
42. One respondent proposed that a 10 year maximum would reflect the seriousness of the offence and would align with the maximum sentence provided for a number of existing offences, including sexual assault, causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent and sexual offences against children. It was also noted that, while a 10-year maximum would significantly diverge from the 5-year maximum set in England and Wales, it would not necessarily be seen as excessive, as 10 years was the maximum set in Australia and New Zealand.

43. The availability of a maximum 14 year sentence for the new domestic abuse offence carried in the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 was also mentioned.

Response and Way Forward

44. The Minister agrees that a maximum sentence in the Crown Court of at least 7 years is appropriate for a new offence of non-fatal strangulation. However, there is merit in the view that a maximum sentence which is longer than that available for the offence of assault occasioning actual bodily harm may be appropriate given the possible extent of harm and significant risk of further more serious offending associated with non-fatal strangulation.
45. The Department was attracted by the argument put forward for a 10 year maximum, and understands the rationale for suggesting that a life sentence should be considered.
46. However, the life sentence is designed to take account of the most serious behaviour imaginable. If the harm caused was so serious as to warrant a life sentence, it was considered that the appropriate offence might be attempted murder.
47. A further factor is that the life sentence which is available for the offence of grievous bodily harm has been in place since 1861. As such it is an old penalty which pre-dates the new regime of public protection sentences introduced under the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 (the 2008 Order).
48. The creation of a life sentence as a potential maximum sentence would introduce additional sentencing processes under the 2008 Order, including an assessment of the risk of the offender committing further serious violent offences, and whether that level of risk requires a life sentence.
49. A current Northern Ireland Court of Appeal guideline case requires that a discretionary life sentence should only be imposed where the offence is “an extremely grave offence, and secondly it is likely that there will be further offending of a grave character”.
50. After much reflection the Minister agreed that aligning the maximum sentence with that provided for the new domestic abuse offence (14 years) would allow sentencing to reflect offending similar to sexual assault, and would also reflect the coercive and controlling elements which can feature in strangulation cases.
51. It is also proposed that the offence should be included in the 2008 Order’s schedule of “specified” serious violent offences. This will allow the court to impose an indeterminate custodial sentence or an extended custodial sentence where it considers this appropriate.

Question 6: Do you agree that expenditure on a programme of education to increase awareness of the problems associated with non-fatal strangulation is required?

- 24 respondents answered “yes”.
 - 1 respondents answered “no”.
 - 0 respondents did not answer this question.
52. It was widely agreed that education is needed as a priority across the board: for those working in the criminal justice system, including police, prosecutors, judges and juries; for doctors and medical staff; and for the general public.
53. It was considered that a holistic approach to education would increase the awareness of the prevalence of non-fatal strangulation, the dangers associated with it and the importance of recognising it, as well as highlighting the possible legal consequences.
54. Many respondents referred to the earlier “Consent to Serious Harm for Sexual Gratification: Not a Defence” consultation, responses and way forward, where the issue of education was also raised; agreeing that the 2 issues must be addressed together.
55. There was also a view that a change in the law could help to educate people more widely on appropriate sexual behaviour, including addressing violent and degrading practices frequently depicted as “normal” in increasingly graphic and easily accessed pornography. This educational approach could help prevent unintentional harm from occurring in the first place.
56. The respondent who answered “No” was strongly of the view that, rather than helping to prevent offending, providing education would have the opposite effect, on the basis of research that indicates that perpetrators of domestic violence often use education to help them ‘skill up’ so that they can evade justice and being caught.

Response and Way Forward

57. The Minister agrees with the majority of respondents that education has a vital part to play in responding to this type of offending and helping the public understand the harm that can potentially result.
58. It is also recognised that first responders and the criminal justice system need to better understand non-fatal strangulation, to be able to meet the treatment and support needs of victims, and to deal with offenders appropriately.

59. Following the Department's "Consent to Serious Harm for Sexual Gratification: Not a Defence" consultation, the need for a robust programme of education was acknowledged and will be part of any implementation policy.
60. It is considered that education on consent and non-fatal strangulation should be delivered as part of a wider cross-Departmental programme of education on sexual offending. The strong correlation with the work being taken forward by the Gillen Review Education Team in this regard is noted.
61. The Department will continue to work with the Gillen Review Education Team and with key stakeholders to develop and support appropriate education on consent and non-fatal strangulation.

Question 7: If yes to Question 6, what should such a programme cover?

62. The prevailing view was that:
 - domestic abuse/non-fatal strangulation awareness and education should be provided to those working in criminal justice;
 - there is a need for a wider campaign to highlight and increase awareness among the public; and
 - campaigns should be designed with input from organisations with expertise in dealing with different groups in the community.
63. The view was expressed that basic training is needed across the board to ensure that everyone has the same level of understanding of non-fatal strangulation and of each agency or body's responsibilities.
64. Many helpful suggestions were put forward. The following is a summary of the most commonly occurring themes.

Service providers and first responders

65. Training should be aimed at:
 - teaching police and frontline medical workers to recognise the signs, symptoms and impact of non-fatal strangulation on the victim;
 - raising awareness that significant harm can occur despite a lack of, or apparently insignificant, visible injury;
 - teaching how and when a victim should be treated;
 - raising awareness that non-fatal strangulation can be an indicator of a much more serious pattern of coercive control;

- ensuring convictions and proper sentencing; and
 - ensuring that victims receive the correct responses when they make complaints, they can stay engaged with the criminal justice system and, most importantly, they are not re-victimised by the process.
66. Strangulation-specific documentation for medical professionals and for the PSNI should be developed, including a checklist for identification of cases as red flags. As victims may not report being strangled for a range of reasons, the checklist should include screening questions to assist in identifying when strangulation has occurred.

Health professionals

- Specialist training should be developed for A&E/ENT staff to examine for non-fatal strangulation; and
- Referral pathways to ENT/specialist services should be developed to diagnose non-fatal strangulation.

Children

67. Age appropriate relationships and sexual education (RSE) remains inadequate and inconsistent in Northern Ireland;
68. RSE must include an honest discussion on non-fatal strangulation alongside a discussion on domestic abuse and sexual violence. The issue of consent is also critical in education of this nature, beginning with personal boundaries and self-esteem;
69. There should be an emphasis on healthy and respectful relationships at all levels;
70. RSE should start much earlier; and it must make clear that pornography is not representative of the vast majority of 'normal' sexual relationships. It should not 'shame' those interested in rough sex, but should highlight the fact that sexual violence - consensual or otherwise - can potentially have serious consequences; and
71. RSE should enable young people to identify potential illegal behaviour in their early and formative relationships.

Public

72. High-profile, Government-funded public awareness campaigns are needed, aimed at preventing domestic and sexual violence and abuse. These should:
- provide an understanding of non-fatal strangulation, recognising the risks of future harm and its highly gendered nature;

- raise awareness of the statistical likelihood of future homicide. This might encourage more victims to report sooner or take steps to leave their abusive relationship;
- raise awareness of the immediate and long term physical and psychological harm victims can suffer;
- focus on consent and trust as a cornerstone of healthy relationships;
- highlight signs of coercive control; and
- identify the support available to anyone in an unhealthy or abusive relationship.

Response and Way Forward

73. The Minister agrees that a general awareness raising campaign would be beneficial, and that specific training should be developed for those who treat and care for victims and for those who deal with the perpetrators.
74. The Minister strongly believes that the provision of effective and consistent RSE in all schools is vital in providing children and young people with the information and tools they need in life to understand healthy relationships, make informed decisions and protect themselves. Changes to how RSE is provided in schools can only be delivered by the Department of Education. However, the Minister is keen that the Department will support such work so far as possible.
75. The Gillen Strategic Training Group is working to implement the Gillen Review recommendations relating to training, including the development of a trauma-informed approach. The Group's Learning Framework outlines a range of training solutions that, once delivered, will result in increased and improved knowledge, awareness and sensitivity for those dealing with sexual offence cases in the justice system. The Framework will remain a live document, and will be continually updated with new multi-agency training opportunities as they are planned. We will work together to include non-fatal strangulation training as part of this programme.
76. The Department is also working with cross-sectoral partners to develop a campaign to challenge sexual offence myths as proposed by the Gillen Review. It is hoped the awareness campaign itself will be launched early next year.
77. The Department's work to develop and support awareness raising and training materials will reflect the suggestions received to this consultation where appropriate.

Question 8: Do you consider something more/different is required to address non-fatal strangulation in Northern Ireland?

- 22 respondents answered “yes”.
 - 3 respondents answered “no”.
 - 0 respondents did not answer this question.
78. In response to this question, as already reflected in earlier questions, respondents felt that education is a vital and an essential part of prevention of violence, and should form a key element of planning for strong and effective legislation, policy and practice.
79. They repeatedly highlighted the importance of any new offence of strangulation being accompanied by a programme of education and training, to increase awareness of the problems associated with non-fatal strangulation.
80. Respondents also referred to recommendations flowing from the Gillen review and the work of the Gillen Education and Awareness working group. It was suggested that awareness around non-fatal strangulation should be included within its work around consent, sexual assault and healthy relationships within schools and higher education settings in an age-appropriate manner. Many considered that this would assist with early intervention.

Specific suggestions included:

- Research and monitoring is needed to better inform us;
- Multi agency working group be established to develop local services and take forward research;
- Northern Ireland should follow best practice, learning from research and work that has been carried out as far afield as the USA, Australia and New Zealand, in addition to the rest of the United Kingdom;
- Funding is needed for support services;
- A dedicated unit should be established within Northern Ireland with medical staff specifically trained and equipped to deal with NFS victims;
- A system for collecting more robust medical evidence for the offences is needed, possibly including MRI scans, with appropriate additional funding for this purpose;
- Cross departmental strategy tackling violence against women and girls, which encompasses education, health, communities and justice must be prioritised;

- Review of the PSNI DASH form is needed to highlight and acknowledge the seriousness of strangulation;
- A new offence of killing by reckless activity and disregard for consequences is needed;
- Courts need to note the nature of the offence, especially when considering bail applications in considering the risk of further serious offending;
- Sentences for any assault including an element of coercive control need to be much harsher;
- Development of a register for repeat offenders;
- Victims should have the right to be informed when the offender is released from jail; and
- The Northern Ireland Executive should show its commitment to addressing gender based violence through compliance with its European Convention on Human Rights obligations immediately.

Response and Way Forward

81. The Minister recognises that addressing this difficult issue will be a long journey and that there are many issues still to consider. The Department will give the suggestions received serious consideration as we continue to develop our thinking, in conjunction with key stakeholders, on what is required, appropriate and deliverable.
82. Where views were expressed on issues the Department or criminal justice agencies are already considering, the views will be shared with the appropriate business areas and agencies for their information and reflection.

Summary Table of Responses and Decisions

Question 1:	Total	Percent
Do you think the law in Northern Ireland is sufficient as it stands?		
Yes	1	4
No	24	96
Not Answered	0	0

Decision:

The Minister agrees that the current law is insufficient.

Question 2:	Total	Percent
Which of the following is your preferred option?		
(a) No change?	0	0
(b) Make strangulation a statutory aggravating factor to be taken into account by the courts when sentencing for any offence?	2	8
(c) Create a new stand-alone offence of non-fatal strangulation with appropriate maximum sentence?	23	92
(d) Other?	0	0
Not Answered	0	0

Decision:

A new stand-alone offence of non-fatal strangulation should be introduced.

Question 3:	Total	Percent
If a new strangulation offence is developed, should it be capable of being tried in the magistrates' courts and in the Crown Court?		
Yes	19	76
No	5	20
Not Answered	1	4

Decision:

The new offence should be triable in both the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court.

Question 4:	Total	Percent
If a new offence could be tried in the magistrates' courts should the maximum sentence be?		
(a) 6 months	0	0
(b) 12 months	0	0
(c) 2 years	17	68
Not Answered	8	32

Decision:

The maximum penalty in the magistrates' courts should be 2 years' imprisonment.

Question 5:	Total	Percent
If a new offence could be tried in the Crown Court, should the maximum sentence be?		

(a) 5 years	0	0
(b) 7 years	20	80
(c) other	4	16
Not Answered	1	4

Decision:

The maximum sentence in the Crown Court should be 14 years' imprisonment; and the offence should be added to the schedule of specified serious violent offences in the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008.

Question 6:	Total	Percent
Do you agree that expenditure on a programme of education to increase awareness of the problems associated with non-fatal strangulation is required?		
Yes	24	96
No	1	4
Not Answered	0	0

Decision:

Agreed.

Question 7:
If YES, to question 6, what should such a programme include?
A number of opinions were expressed and are summarised in the body of this report.

Decision:

The Department's work to develop and support awareness raising and training materials will reflect the suggestions received where appropriate.

Question 8: Do you consider something more/different is required to address non-fatal strangulation in Northern Ireland?	Total	Percent
Yes	22	88
No	3	12
Not Answered	0	0

Decision:

The Department will give the suggestions received serious consideration as we continue to develop our thinking, in conjunction with key stakeholders, on what is required, appropriate and deliverable.