

**Written evidence: Committee on Standards and Privileges, Northern Ireland  
Assembly (SCT0009)**

**Committee on Standards inquiry into sanctions**

Thank you for the letter from your predecessor, Kate Green MP, dated 14 April 2020 in which you invited the Assembly Committee on Standards and Privileges to submit evidence to your inquiry into sanctions. Unfortunately, the Committee did not meet after receiving your invitation to submit evidence until 1 July 2020 but it looks forward to reading the outcome of your inquiry once completed.

In terms of the Assembly's arrangements for sanctions, the options available are specified in Assembly [Standing Order](#) 69B which states:

*'(1) Where it appears to the Committee on Standards and Privileges that a member has failed to comply with any provision of the Code of Conduct or Standing Orders 69 to 69C, the committee may make a report to the Assembly. The report may include a recommendation that a sanction be imposed upon the member.*

*(2) In consideration of such a report, the Assembly may impose a sanction upon a member who has failed to comply with any of those provisions.*

*(3) Sanctions may include, but are not limited to –*

*(a) a requirement that the member apologise to the Assembly;*

*(b) censure of the member by the Assembly;*

*(c) exclusion of the member from proceedings of the Assembly for a specified period;*

*(d) withdrawal of any of the member's rights and privileges as a member for that period;*

*and for the avoidance of doubt, the rights and privileges withdrawn under subparagraph (d) may include the rights to salary and allowances'*

You may also wish to note that failure to register an interest, declare an interest or adhere to the rules on paid advocacy may be an offence under [section 43 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998](#). The Assembly Commissioner for Standards or the Committee on Standards and Privileges may refer to the relevant authorities complaints received in respect of such an alleged failure.

Additionally, in reference to your point on delegating the power to sanction to, for example, the Commissioner for Standards at the House of Commons, I should point out that, under [section 27\(1\) of the Assembly Members \(Independent Financial Review and Standards\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2011](#), the Assembly Commissioner is precluded from making specific recommendations for the imposition of a sanction on a Member

I hope you find this useful, however should you require any further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

*July 2020*