



**Labour Relations**  
**A G E N C Y**  
*Improving Employment Relations*

*Chairman and Chief Executive's Office*

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14 May 2014

Cathie White  
Committee Clerk  
Room 343, Parliament Buildings  
Ballymiscaw  
Stormont  
BELFAST BT4 3XX

Dear Cathie,

**RE: Work and Families Bill – DEL Committee**

The Labour Relations Agency Board, at its meeting 20 June 2013, considered the DEL Sharing Parental Rights, Extending Flexibility at Work – Public Consultation document May 2013 and determined the following response.

**'The Agency notes the contents of the consultation paper and acknowledges that the proposed new arrangements are designed to provide working parents with greater flexibility in determining how best to share the statutory leave and pay entitlements associated with the birth or adoption of a child and, in addition, introduces a proposal to broaden, very significantly, the existing right to request flexible working.**

**The Agency makes no comment on the substantive issues in the consultation paper other than to make the general point that any amendment to existing employment legislation or new employment rights deriving from the proposals should be clear, concise and unambiguous if satellite legislation is to be avoided. In the micro firm economy of Northern Ireland the Agency is particularly mindful of the challenges faced by many employers in understanding and complying with contemporary employment law.**

**The Agency in promoting good employment practice and in furtherance of resolving disputes advocates clarity in and the simplification of employment law. To this end we will be prepared to offer advice and guidance on any new legislative provisions.**

**We stress that the clearer the legislative provisions the easier it will be to provide advice and guidance and, in the case of flexible working, as is the intention in GB, allow the Agency to draft an effective and user friendly Code of Practice.'**

Please note the Agency submits the above to the DEL Committee as confirmation of its response to the proposals contained in the Work and Families Bill.

Yours sincerely,



**Bill Patterson**  
**Chief Executive**