Closing the Gap: Why Northern Ireland Needs Jade's Law Now

When we successfully campaigned to get **Jade's Law** onto the statute books in England and Wales through the **Victims and Prisoners Act 2024**, it was a landmark moment for justice. It sent a clear message: **Parental responsibility is a duty of care, not an absolute right that survives the intentional killing of a child's other parent.**

However, as of March 2026, a painful legal disparity remains. While families in England and Wales will now be protected from the secondary trauma of facing a killer in court, families in Northern Ireland are still being left behind.

The Devolution Gap

Because family law is a devolved matter, the protections we fought so hard for did not automatically extend to Northern Ireland. This has created a "postcode lottery" of safety and common sense.
Currently, in Northern Ireland:

- A parent who kills their partner **retains legal rights** over their children from behind bars.
- Grieving guardians must **seek permission** from the killer for routine decisions like school trips, passport applications, or medical care.
- Families are forced into **traumatic and expensive legal battles** to strip responsibility from a convicted murderer.

Families Are Reaching Out

Since Jade's Law became law in England and Wales, I have been approached by a number of families and support organisations in Northern Ireland. Their stories are a reminder of why this work isn't finished.

They are asking for the same protection. They are asking for Jade's Law.

A Vital Opportunity: The Sentencing Bill

The good news is that we have a vehicle for change.

The Northern Ireland Assembly is currently debating the **Criminal Justice (Sentencing etc.) Bill**.

This Bill is the perfect place to insert a mirrored version of Jade's Law. By including provisions for the **automatic suspension of parental responsibility upon sentencing**, the Assembly can move from a system that reacts to trauma to one that proactively prevents it.

My Commitment to the Entire UK

I did not design Jade's Law to be a regional privilege; I designed it to be a fundamental standard of decency and child protection.
I am fully committed to ensuring that families throughout the entire United Kingdom have the protections that Jade's Law provides. Geography should never dictate whether a child is protected from the influence of a person who killed their parent. I am currently working closely with Northern Irish advocates, and will provide technical briefings and legislative blueprints to ensure the Assembly has everything they need to do the right thing.

How You Can Help

We cannot let this opportunity pass. If you are in Northern Ireland, your voice matters:

1. **Contact your local MLA:** Ask them to support the inclusion of "Jade's Law" provisions in the Criminal Justice (Sentencing etc.) Bill.
2. **Share the message:** We need to raise awareness that this gap exists and that the solution is already written.
3. **Justice shouldn't stop at the border. Let's bring Jade's Law to Northern Ireland.**

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