



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Criminal Justice Committee

Angela Constance MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Justice and
Home Affairs
The Scottish Government

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29 June 2023

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Tackling online child abuse, grooming and exploitation

I am writing to you following the Criminal Justice Committee's evidence session of 31 May 2023 on tackling online child abuse, grooming and exploitation.

During the evidence session, the Committee heard about the expected impact on these crimes of some of the measures within the UK Government's Online Safety Bill, which is currently being considered by the House of Lords. The Committee would appreciate your view on what other measures the UK Government could take to improve online safety for children.

The Committee is aware of recent media reports that the First Minister has received a commitment from the UK Government to include provisions in the UK Online Safety Bill that aim to tackle social media firms allowing violent clips of children attacking other children, such as attacks on teenagers at schools, to be posted and to remain on their platforms. We would appreciate it if you could please provide details of this request.

The Committee also heard that there is a lack of understanding of the scale, nature and extent of child sexual abuse in Scotland. Could you please confirm what actions the Scottish Government is taking to explore whether there is a specific challenge in Scotland to tackling these issues and what information on the scale of the problem is published by the Scottish Government or other relevant bodies?

During our evidence session, some of the witnesses asked that the Scottish Government considers introducing an overarching sexual harm strategy that covers prevention, intervention and recovery within Scotland. Could you please confirm

whether the Scottish Government is giving consideration to the introduction of an overarching strategy?

Finally, in your letter of 6 April, you indicated that the Scottish Government is to meet with Police Scotland to discuss the views provided by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service on the perceived legislative gaps in tackling these matters and to respond to the issues raised by Police Scotland. It would be helpful if you could please provide the Committee with an update on the outcome of those discussions.

I look forward to your response.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Audrey N : AN". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Audrey Nicoll MSP
Convener, Criminal Justice Committee