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Sue Webber MSP
Convener, Education, Children and Young People
Committee

Cc Criminal Justice Committee

Tuesday 20 Febraury 2023

Dear Convener,

At the Stage 2 consideration of the Children (Care and Justice) Bill on 31 January, I committed to provide the committee with more information about a planned roundtable on issues relating to anonymity for deceased child victims to be hosted by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs today, 20 February.

The purpose of the event is to bring together experts from the third sector, legal profession, justice agencies, academia, media and government to participate in an evidence-led discussion on the end point for anonymity in relation to child victims. Those invited include representatives from support organisations, including Victim Support Scotland and Children 1st; the Children and Young People's Commissioner; academics from Glasgow Caledonian University; representatives from the legal profession, including the Law Society of Scotland; representatives from Police Scotland and COPFS; and the National Union of Journalists and the Independent Press Standards Organisation. The Justice spokespeople from the Parliamentary parties have been invited along with the conveners of the Education, Children and Young People and Criminal Justice Committees and Ruth Maguire MSP.

We will publish the key points raised in the discussion and how these may feed into further development of policy and practice in this area and send to the Committees.

The Scottish Government fully recognises the need to ensure those with lived experience can feed directly into the discussion in a person-centred, trauma-informed way. To facilitate this, officials are working with Victim Support Scotland and its Service for Families Bereaved by Crime to co-design bespoke engagement involving bereaved families, the Cabinet Secretary and myself, following the roundtable.

I would like to offer my assurance that the Scottish Government recognises the importance of this matter. We are committed to progressing our consideration in collaboration with a range of stakeholders to ensure the issues are fully understood, particularly in light of any changes being significant, and not yet having been subject to full consultation. We will use

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the outcome of the roundtable and the engagement with bereaved families to inform our next steps.

In relation to the request at stage 2 for more details on the views of the judiciary on the current court process for children, please find the responses from the Sheriffs Association and Lord President to the consultation on the Bill at this link :

https://consult.gov.scot/children-and-families/childrens-care-and-justice-reforms/consultation/published_select_respondent.

As indicated in the stage 2 sessions I am committed to further discussions on some issues and I will be in touch with individual Committee members in the coming weeks in advance of stage 3.

I hope committee members find this information helpful.

This letter is copied to the Criminal Justice Committee.



Natalie Don
Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping The Promise

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