

Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee

2nd Meeting, 2021 (Session 6), Tuesday, 7 September 2021

Note by the clerk

Scottish Government priorities for the Civil Justice remit in session 6

Introduction

1. Following its establishment in June 2021, the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee will undertake its first oral evidence taking sessions of Session 6 at its meeting on 7 September. This session will be one of a number of evidence gathering sessions scheduled to take place during September and October 2021.
2. The aim of this evidence session is explore with the Scottish Government the key issues facing the civil justice system in Scotland. The information gathered will assist the Committee with the formulation of its work programme for 2021/22.

Scottish Government priorities

3. At its meeting on 7 September, the Committee will take oral evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans, and the Minister for Community Safety on the plans and priorities of the Scottish Government for the civil justice portfolio which forms part of the remit of the EHRCJ Committee.
4. This will provide an opportunity for the Committee to explore the Government's policy proposals in the area of civil justice, as well as consider other major policy issues, such as:
 - Scottish Government proposals for primary and secondary legislation in the civil justice portfolio for 2021/22 as well as looking ahead to possible areas of legislation for the rest of Session 6;

- Outstanding policy issues from Session 5, such as the ongoing impact on, and recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic on the Scottish civil justice system (such as the court system, access to justice, reform of legal aid, etc);
- The potential challenges facing the civil justice sector in Scotland during Session 6 of the Scottish Parliament (2021-26) and how the Scottish Government plans to meet those challenges, and
- The funding and budgetary landscape for the civil justice portfolio.

Witnesses

5. The Committee will question the following witnesses at today's meeting:

- Keith Brown MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans
- Ash Denham MSP, Minister for Community Safety
- Neil Rennick, Director of Justice
- Denise Swanson, Deputy Director, Civil Law and Legal System

Clerks to the Committee
September 2021