



F/T: [REDACTED]
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

David Harvie
Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal
[REDACTED]

9 February 2021

Dear David,

ROUNDTABLE EVENT: RECOVER, RENEW & TRANSFORM PROGRAMME FOR JUSTICE

As you will be aware the Scottish Government established a Recover, Renew, Transform programme for the justice system to recover essential services and transform how the system operates to ensure a resilient, effective justice system now and for the future.

Work under the programme continues, and I want to pay credit to the urgent, effective and collaborative work which has been undertaken in response to the pandemic. This includes the flexible and innovative responses to meet the operational challenges which COVID 19 presents, as well as the fundamental protection of rights and freedoms. I am also keen that we learn the lessons from the approach to date to inform both ongoing recovery and longer term transformation.

I welcomed the Lord President's decisive action of 11 January to amend the operation of court business, which balances the interests of justice with the very serious public health challenges presented by the new variant of Covid-19. It is crucial that we ensure our criminal justice system operates as safely and effectively as possible during these unprecedented times.

I am committed to continue working with justice organisations, the legal profession and the third sector, to consider all options to respond to the inevitable increase in cases awaiting trial, as well as the wider impact of the on-going public health challenges across the justice system.

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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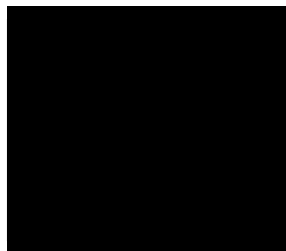
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To this end I intend to hold a virtual roundtable on Monday 1 March 12:00 – 14:00 to explore with stakeholders what further actions could be considered to mitigate where possible the impact of restrictions on court users, victims and witnesses and the accused. I would also like to take this time to consider options for practical and achievable solutions to address the ongoing challenges to the system including the current backlog of cases, ensuring that the system is operating sustainably, effectively and building resilience.

Building on the budget statement on Thursday, and my recent letter of response to the Justice Committee, the Criminal Justice Board will produce a paper to support these discussions. This will be circulated in advance.

I would be grateful if you could contact my Diary Secretary, [REDACTED], at CabSecJustice@gov.scot to confirm your attendance at this virtual roundtable, which will take place on MS Teams.

Best wishes,



HUMZA YOUSAF

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