



FACULTY OF ADVOCATES

09 June 2022

Ms Audrey Nicoll MSP
Convenor, Criminal Justice Committee
Scottish Parliament

Via email - justicecommittee@parliament.scot

Dear Ms Nicoll

Thank you for your letter. Faculty is fully aware of the concerns that have been raised in the media. I have myself spoken to a number of female members and am not aware of a widespread problem, but in this area there is no room for complacency. I have accordingly issued a Dean's Ruling reminding Members of their professional and moral obligations, which include a duty to call out misogyny, or indeed any other kind of prejudice, should they encounter it. I have also commissioned an independent review into the culture of and diversity at the bar. I am fully committed to ensuring that the bar is a welcoming and safe place for all, and have repeatedly affirmed that in my opinion the only barrier to entrance should be ability. I explained all of this in a recent meeting with the Minister, Ms Regan MSP, and have no difficulty in keeping the Committee apprised of steps we are taking in this regard.

As for the publication of disciplinary decisions, the rules as they stand do not allow for publication of acquittals. We are reviewing whether or not that remains appropriate. For past findings adverse to the member in question we are reviewing the extent to which we can retrospectively decide on publication on the website as opposed to the current situation of inspection of the register held in Parliament House. There are also questions of privacy that might require redaction of personal identifiers. This is *Avis* all under active consideration and may require rule changes, which in turn require the approval of the Lord President. Again, I have no problem in updating the committee as this process continues.

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In closing, I repeat my assurance that I, and indeed the office bearers and Faculty Council, are fully committed to equality for all - whether members of Faculty, or clients, or members of the public. Anything that departs from this is not in accordance with the Guide to Conduct, and can be expected to be dealt with appropriately.

Yours sincerely

Roddy W. Dunlop
Dean of Faculty

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