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Access to court transcripts for complainers in rape cases

Thank you for your letter of 26 October.

I am pleased that the Committee is supportive of our plans for access to court transcripts pilot. You have raised several further questions all of which are part of current considerations prior to the launch of the pilot next year.

On the question of any retrospective aspect of the planned pilot I remain sympathetic to this forming part of the pilot and can confirm that we are in discussions with SCTS around how that could work in practice. I can also confirm that in addition to ensuring plain English and accessibility, we will be discussing the planned application and guidance forms with key stakeholders in advance of the pilot commencing.

I note the Committee's observations regarding data gathering. Clearly it is important that we gather sufficient data from all those involved in the pilot, and that would include those eligible if we were to apply retrospectively, to be able to complete an effective evaluation and to make informed decisions around next steps. That information could also prove valuable in identifying wider trends which could help drive improvements. Understanding the basis on which an application is being made will be fundamental to that process and would be the gateway to accessing funding. We would of course look to manage this sensitively through the application process.

Finally, in relation to funding, we are aware there may be increased implications for funding and will take this into account as part of our evaluation.

I will update the committee again ahead of the pilot launch.



ANGELA CONSTANCE

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