I am writing further to your letter of 20 January 2017 on behalf of the Public Petitions Committee. Following its meeting on 19 January, wherein Petition 1551 (Mandatory reporting of child abuse) was discussed, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government to ask for a further update on its engagement with the UK Government, following the response provided on 15 November 2016. The Committee also agreed to ask the Scottish Government what steps it will take to address this issue if no response is forthcoming from the UK Government.

Officials from the Scottish Government contacted the relevant UK Government officials on 31 January for an update on their progress in publishing their response to their consultation “Reporting and acting on child abuse and neglect”, which closed in October 2016. UK officials confirmed that they are still reviewing and analysing the consultation responses and remain unable to provide an indicative date for publishing their findings, although they expect that it will be in the first part of this year. They reiterated their commitment to continue engagement with the Scottish Government as they move further through the process.

The Scottish Government recognises the fundamental importance of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children in Scotland, and is committed to action to improve child protection in Scotland where necessary. We will give careful consideration to the conclusions of the UK consultation once available, and provide a further update to the Committee.