

PE1975/V: Reform the law relating to Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs)

Minister for Victims and Community Safety submission, 23 April 2024

Petition PE1975 raises important issues about the use of our legal system and the possibilities for obstructing freedom of expression. I wanted to write to inform you of my intention to consult on SLAPPs in autumn this year.

Work on non-legislative solutions is already underway. The UK Government launched a SLAPPs Taskforce last year to develop non-legislative responses to SLAPPs. A wide range of interests are represented on the Taskforce and a Scottish Government official attends along with their UK and NI counterparts. The Taskforce is tentatively expected to conclude its work towards the end of 2024.

Given this work and the legislative developments that have taken place elsewhere in the UK and in the EU I am keen that more progress is made here in Scotland. That is why I intend to consult on SLAPPs later this year.

I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before the Committee on 01 May to discuss these matters and look forward to any questions you may have.

SIOBHIAN BROWN