



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Criminal Justice Committee

Mr Roddy Dunlop QC
Dean
Faculty of Advocates

All correspondence c/o:
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By email

6 June, 2022

Dear Roddy,

Re. Actions to tackle sexism and misogyny

I am writing to you on behalf of the Criminal Justice Committee on the policies in place within the Faculty of Advocates to tackle any allegations of sexism and misogyny by members of the profession.

The Committee recently discussed this issue following details in the media about two high-profile disciplinary cases in recent months. Whilst it is not our place to make comment on those cases or the outcomes, we are nevertheless seriously concerned about the wider issues that they raise and the risks they put on all of our efforts to improve the experiences of women and girls in the criminal justice system. We are also concerned that relationships between the Faculty and key bodies such as those that advise women and girls on sex offence issues may have been damaged by recent events.

I would like to ask you as Dean of the Faculty for your reassurance that all possible efforts are taking place to identify and deal effectively with sexist and/or misogynistic conduct by members of the profession and for details of the actions being taken and policies in place, or planned, to make sure all members of the Faculty meet the necessary standards in this respect. We would want to be assured that the culture of the profession is one in which instances of sexist or misogynistic behaviour are not tolerated and not acceptable.

It would also be helpful if you could please provide reassurance on the steps that the Faculty are taking in light of these recent cases to review the impact on women working in the profession or considering joining the profession.

Finally, I would also ask about the status of reports from the Faculty's disciplinary panels. Our understanding is that the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission's report of June 2019 (*Faculty of Advocates: Review of conduct complaints handling processes*) recommended (recommendation 6) that the Faculty should publish disciplinary findings on its website, but this does not appear to be happening. Could you please explain your reasoning for this?

I look forward to your response and to working closely with the Faculty of Advocates over the coming months as we all begin to consider how the recommendations of the review by the Lord Justice Clerk (*Improving the Management of Sexual Offence Cases*) are taken forward by the Scottish Government and others. I also look forward to working with you when the Scottish Government completes its consideration of how to take forward the Robertson Review.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Audrey N: cjh". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Audrey Nicoll MSP
Convener, Criminal Justice Committee