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5 November 2026

Dear Conveners,

Statutory inquiry into group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation – the Jay Inquiry

I write to inform the Committee that, in a statement to Parliament today, I announced that the Jay Inquiry into group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSAE) will commence its work on 11 November.

As part of that statement, I also announced the publication today of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference. These set out the scope and objectives of the Inquiry and provide the framework within which the independent work of the Inquiry will be undertaken.

Alongside this, preparations are being finalised for the launch, in the coming weeks, of the Truth Project. The Truth Project will provide a dedicated opportunity for victims and survivors to share their experiences and contribute to improving Scotland's response to child sexual abuse and exploitation. Further information on the operation of the Project and arrangements for engagement will be made available in due course.

As emphasised in my statement to Parliament, the Jay Inquiry forms an important part of a broader programme of work to strengthen Scotland's response to child sexual abuse and exploitation. Its work will sit alongside and be informed by the findings of the National Review of group-based child sexual abuse and child criminal exploitation, which published its Phase 1 findings on 3 September, as well as the ongoing work of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, Police Scotland's Operation Decerno – a nationwide review of group-related CSAE cases, and the efforts of the National CSAE Strategic Group and its partner organisations to strengthen prevention, detection, disruption, and support for victims and survivors.

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Given the significance of this work, I wished to ensure that members were informed of these developments. The Scottish Government remains committed to ensuring that every child in Scotland grows up loved, safe and respected. Our priority is to prevent children from experiencing harm wherever possible, and to ensure that those who seek to exploit, abuse or endanger children are identified, held accountable and have nowhere to hide from justice.

I trust that this update is helpful to the Committee and I look forward to continuing to engage with members as our determined work to protect children from this abhorrent abuse progresses.

Yours sincerely,

MÀIRI MCALLAN

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