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Convener
Social Justice and Social Security Committee
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Dear Collette,

Thank you for sharing a copy of your Committee's report into "Inquiry Into Financial Considerations When Leaving an Abusive Relationship" with me. I am grateful to the Committee both for its work in undertaking the Inquiry and for the comprehensive report.

As the Committee will be aware, the Scottish Government remains committed to eradicating all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls, as well as the attitudes that perpetuate it. We are resolute in the belief that coercive control, including financial abuse, has no place in Scottish society. As such, all evidence, be it a Committee report such as this, academic research or stakeholder concerns is of interest to help shape our policy responses.

As your report and many respondents to the inquiry noted, our Equally Safe strategy explicitly addresses financial and economic abuse. It recognises perpetrators control finances and women's access to employment and opportunities. It highlights women's financial inequality with men enables that abuse. It acknowledges that structures and systems exacerbate that inequality and act as a barrier to women leaving. And as I said to you when I provided evidence to the Committee, and you note within the report, "[u]nder the auspices of the strategy, it is imperative that we continue to identify and address the barriers that hinder survivors from leaving abusers". The report will be helpful in furthering our thinking on what needs to be done and how.

The information contained within the report covers many Ministerial portfolios, and I have asked that the numerous policy officials whose work is impacted to consider the contents.

This includes but is not limited to social security, advice services, housing and homelessness, legal aid, and no recourse to public funds.

I will respond to the Committee with a more detailed response, reflective of the work that went into this report – both by the Committee and all those who gave evidence – once we have had an opportunity to fully consider the contributions and recommendations.

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot



In the meantime, thank you once again for the work you put into this report.

Yours sincerely,

KAUKAB STEWART MSP, Minister for Equalities

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