Dear David,

Public Petitions Committee Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation.

Thank you for your letter of 19 June regarding the Committee’s consideration of the Government Response to the Committee’s Report into tackling Child Sexual Exploitation in Scotland.

Child sexual exploitation is an abhorrent crime and can have a devastating impact on its victims and their families. The Scottish Government is absolutely committed to protecting children and young people’s wellbeing and has already implemented a range of work with our partners to ensure we remain vigilant to abuse and are able to offer support to survivors.

As you are aware, a Ministerial Working Group was established to specifically examine the issue of CSE and to develop a National Action Plan by examining the recommendations from the Public Petitions Committee, alongside their own expertise in child protection. To further inform the decisions of the Ministerial Working Group, a sub-group of the Scottish Child Protection Committee Chairs Forum was reconvened with refreshed membership in August 2014 with a focus on child sexual exploitation. It comprises front line practitioners, managers and academics from a number of disciplines. The remit of the group is to draw from their combined expertise and take forward a number of discreet pieces of work which the Ministerial Working Group will consider further. They will also develop protocols to be used as best practice throughout local authorities and ensure consistency in the delivery of CSE services.

In this context, the Scottish Government and partners are pausing and reflecting on the Jay Report into Child Sexual Abuse in Rotherham. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning and Cabinet Secretary for Justice have met with the author of the report and representatives from statutory agencies to consider the robustness of our approach, and any lessons we can learn from the report. With this in mind, we will continue to work on the National Action Plan and I hope to be in a position to provide you with a copy in November.
I hope that you find this further information helpful.

AILEEN CAMPBELL