

## **Justice Committee**

### **Civil actions for rape and other serious crimes**

#### **Written submission from Victim Support Scotland**

1. Victim Support Scotland (VSS) is the largest charity supporting people affected by crime across Scotland through the provision of practical help, emotional support and essential information. The vast majority of support we provide relates to the criminal justice sphere. However, we welcome the opportunity to respond to the Justice Committee request for comment on rape victims raising civil actions.
2. VSS supports victims of sexual violence and campaigns for improved responses to these crimes within the criminal justice sector and believes there should be a priority on getting it right for victims. We do acknowledge however, that civil action could provide a victim another opportunity to seek justice where they have been let down by the criminal courts.
3. Offering support in a civil setting is not our main area of expertise. However, we have supported victims of domestic and sexual abuse through the civil courts having assisted them before, during, and after their criminal trial. Our experience on what led these victims to go through the further trauma of a civil action is about them obtaining recognition that what happened to them was wrong.
4. We believe the availability of civil legal aid is crucial to victims pursuing civil actions.

Victim Support Scotland  
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