

# Criminal Justice Committee

## 5th Meeting, 2021 (Session 6), Wednesday 22 September 2021

### Roundtables

### Note by the clerk

### Introduction

1. The Criminal Justice Committee is holding a series of roundtable meetings about subjects within its remit.
2. Two roundtable evidence sessions will take place on 22 September 2021.
3. The subject of the first roundtable evidence session is **priorities for domestic abuse, gendered-violence and sexual offences in session 6**.
4. The subject of the second roundtable evidence session is **victims' rights and victim support**.

### Participants

5. The following people will be taking part in the first roundtable—
  - Rabia Roshan, Violence Against Women and Girls Development Worker, Amina - the Muslim Women's Resource Centre;
  - Moira Price, Procurator Fiscal Domestic Abuse, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service;
  - Ronnie Renucci QC, Vice Dean, Faculty of Advocates;
  - Detective Chief Superintendent Sam Faulds, Head of Public Protection, Specialist Crime Division, Police Scotland;
  - Sandy Brindley, Chief Executive, Rape Crisis Scotland;
  - Dr Marsha Scott, Chief Executive, Scottish Women's Aid;
  - Professor Michele Burman, Professor of Criminology and Professor James Chalmers, Regius Professor of Law, University of Glasgow.

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6. The following people will be taking part in the second roundtable—
- Mary Glasgow, Chief Executive, Children 1st;
  - John Watt, Chair, Parole Board for Scotland;
  - Superintendent Colin Convery, Partnerships, Prevention and Community Wellbeing, Police Scotland;
  - Tim Barraclough, Executive Director, Tribunals and Office of the Public Guardian, Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service;
  - Teresa Medhurst, Interim Chief Executive, Scottish Prison Service;
  - Kate Wallace, Chief Executive Officer, Victim Support Scotland;
  - Sean Duffy, Chief Executive Officer, The Wise Group.

## **Format**

7. Members of the Committee will be attending the meeting in person. Everyone else will be participating in the meeting using a video link. This is due to the rules on social distancing.

## **Topics**

8. The roundtable evidence session on priorities for domestic abuse, gendered-violence and sexual offences in session 6 will be a chance to discuss topics such as—
- The impact of coronavirus restrictions on reporting and investigating these crimes, and the provision of support.
  - The impact, and any unintended consequences of recent legislation introduced to improve the identification and prosecution of these crimes.
  - The experience of victims who report these crimes and whether this has improved.
  - The general requirement for corroboration.
  - The not proven verdict.
  - Whether a crime involving hatred or prejudice because of gender should be classed as a hate crime.
  - The *Improving the Management of Sexual Offence Cases* report recommendations by the Lord Justice Clerk, Lady Dorrian, such as:

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- the creation of a specialist court, with trauma-informed procedures, for serious cases;
  - complainers having access to independent legal representation in objecting to questioning about their previous sexual history;
  - a presumption in favour of pre-recording complainers' evidence in serious cases;
  - complainers having a statutory right not to be identified in the media rather than relying upon current convention and agreement; and
  - a pilot of single judge rape trials, instead of juries, to ascertain their effectiveness.
9. The roundtable evidence session on victims' rights and victim support will be a chance to discuss topics such as—
- The impact of current legislation on improving the experience of victims and witnesses of crimes, including the experience of children and vulnerable witnesses.
  - Proposals for a Barnahus style approach to taking evidence from children, including the establishment of Scotland's first Barnahus, the Child's House for Healing in East Renfrewshire.
  - Possible legislation to establish a Victims' Commissioner as a spokesperson for victims and witnesses.
  - The impact of the Victim Surcharge, which was introduced in 2019.
  - The effectiveness of the Victim Notification Scheme which was introduced in 2013 by the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill.
  - The role that preventative spend and action can have on reducing the number of victims of crimes.

**Clerks to the Committee  
September 2021**