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11 March 2025

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (PROTECTION AND GUIDANCE) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2020.

Thank you for your letter of 25 February 2025 regarding the implementation of various Acts including the Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) (Scotland) Act 2020. As the Minister for Equalities, this Act sits within my portfolio and I will therefore be providing an update on progress to implement it.

I understand the Committee was seeking more detail than was provided in the January 2025 letter. I hope that this letter can assure the Committee that good progress is being made to implement the Act.

As the Committee will be aware, the 2020 Act makes provision for FGM Protection Orders and for statutory guidance on FGM Protection Orders, as well as any matter relating to FGM.

Since the start of this year, my officials have been engaging with the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service and the Scottish Civil Justice Council to understand the legal and technical changes that are required for implementation of the Act.

My officials have also set up a Statutory Guidance Working Group which includes representation from Health, Social Work, Education, Child Protection, Police Scotland and third sector organisations. In order to ensure close links with the Children's Hearing System, representation also includes Children's Hearing Scotland and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration.

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Additionally, my officials are considering what training and awareness raising materials are required to support the implementation of the Act. These materials will be developed in consultation with the working group and any other relevant stakeholders.

I have asked my officials to work closely with our partners to ensure that organisations are adequately prepared for any changes, and to ensure that any potential challenges are identified and addressed. As such, I am content with the progress being made.

I hope this letter has provided the Committee with reassurance of the progress to implement the Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) (Scotland) Act 2020. I am copying this letter to Jamie Hepburn MSP, Minister for Parliamentary Business.

Yours Sincerely,

Kaukab Stewart

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