

# **Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee**

## **Regulation of Legal Services (Scotland) Bill: Stage 2**

### **Email correspondence received from Esther Robertson, 13 January 2025**

I have been approached recently by a number of people expressing their concerns about the progress on the legal services Bill. I understand that the deadline for amendments is this coming Wednesday and that they already run to several hundred.

It is clear from my appearances at committee hearings that I am disappointed that my original recommendation did not form the basis of the Bill. However, my main priority now is to ensure that whatever is implemented is an improvement on the current model.

I was therefore shocked to learn that the committee not only has a new Convenor but also several new members and a new clerking team most of whom were presumably not involved in the evidence sessions in 2023. For those people to be expected to scrutinise such a significant number of amendments in what I understand to be only four meetings of the committee has set alarm bells ringing. Part of the challenge faced by the SLCC is the complexity of the founding legislation after significant amendment.

The CSG report envisaged committees having stable membership able to build up expertise to allow members to fulfil their obligations. The current situation risks producing yet more complex legislation that makes things worse rather than better.

I am therefore breaking the vow of silence I had made to myself to urge the committee to consider pausing or extending the process to allow sufficient time to ensure that the final Act is fit for purpose.

I am happy for this email to be shared with the committee and in the spirit of transparency I intend to email the First Minister in similar terms about my concerns and include this message, so he is aware of my intervention.

I would be happy to discuss this further if that would be helpful.

Kind regards

Esther Robertson