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26 February 2025

Dear Karen

Scottish Government Legislative Programme Update

Thank you for your letter of 7 February 2025 in which you sought an update on the Misogyny Bill which the Government committed to bringing forward in our Programme for Government for 2024/25.

You may be aware that on the same day you wrote to me, Angela Constance MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs, answered a Parliamentary Question (S6W-34000) providing an update on that Bill. In her written response to the question of whether the Scottish Government still plans to publish a Bill to implement the recommendations of the Working Group on Misogyny in the current parliamentary session, and, if so, when, the Cabinet Secretary noted that the Working Group on Misogyny and the Criminal Law recommended the creation of 'gendered' laws which specifically provide protection to women and girls.

The Cabinet Secretary then set out that there is currently a case before the Supreme Court concerning the definition of 'women and girls', and therefore noted it will be important to carefully consider the implications, if any, of the judgment in that case for the proposed Bill before any Bill might be introduced in Parliament.

I can provide no further update beyond this at present.

In your letter of 7 February, you also sought an update on legislation to end conversion practices in Scotland.

As you will be aware, in the 2024/25 Programme for Government, the Government made clear our commitment to progressing plans on ending conversion practices in Scotland and our work towards complementary approaches across the UK. The Programme for

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Government also set out our commitment to preparing legislation for introduction to the Scottish Parliament should a UK-wide approach not be achievable.

Engagement between the Scottish and UK Governments remains ongoing, and this is being led on by Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice. At the same time, we are taking account of feedback received from the public consultation held last year in relation to the development of Scottish legislation. The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice will write to you with a further update in due course.

I am copying both Angela Constance MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs, and Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, into this response.

Yours

JAMIE HEPBURN

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