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FROM THE BARONESS CHISHOLM OF OWLPEN  
GOVERNMENT WHIP FOR CABINET OFFICE, DEFRA AND DEPT  
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28 November 2016

*Dear Richard,*

**POLICING AND CRIME BILL: ETHNICITY MONITORING IN THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM**

I am writing to follow up the debate in Committee, on Wednesday 16 November (Hansard columns 1495-1503), on Baroness Brinton's amendment 228A, where I agreed to write to you about the costs and anticipated timescales of making technical changes to IT systems across the youth justice system, in order to incorporate the "18+1" ethnicity monitoring criteria (which includes 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' and 'Arab' as categories).

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) uses a number of different IT systems to monitor performance across the youth justice system. The two largest systems are eAsset, the custody booking system, and the Youth Justice Management Information System (YJMIS). As I indicated in Committee, both of these systems currently use the 16+1 ethnicity monitoring criteria, from the 2001 census categories. This means that they do not capture Gypsy / Romany / Travellers (GRT) as a distinct ethnic category.

YJMIS is used to record the ethnicity of young people in the youth justice system and draws on data from individual Youth Offending Team (YOT) case management systems. In order to collect data on GRT children and young people, not only would the YJB have to make changes to their central systems and the interfaces between these and the individual case management systems, but it is likely that YOTs would have to amend their individual case management systems too. Any changes to these individual case management systems will need to be commissioned by YOTs and may have an associated cost. Currently there are four case management system suppliers covering 158 YOTs in England and Wales. YOTs are the responsibility of a Local Authority and any costs relating to change requests charged by case management suppliers will need to be covered by individual YOTs.

It is unclear how long it will take to consult with local authorities and consider their response before deciding the change is to be implemented. However, I am pleased to say that the YJB have confirmed they are keen to move to the 18+1 ethnicity monitoring system. In October 2016, the YJB informed the four case management system suppliers of their intention to move towards the revised classification system. A specific policy lead from the YJB has been allocated and the YJB is now currently formalising its business requirements with a view to initiating a preliminary impact assessment exercise before the end of 2016. This impact assessment will set out the dependencies with existing IT systems, both within the youth justice system and with other local IT systems, and identify the feasibility and indicative costs of moving to the revised classification system.

I am sorry that I am unable to provide you with specific figures or timescales at this point, but I hope you are reassured that the YJB are keen in principle to drive this change forward, and that the government is committed to accurate monitoring of ethnicity across the youth justice system.

I am copying this letter to Baroness Brinton, Lord Alton of Liverpool, Baroness Whitaker, Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville, Earl Attlee, Lord Paddick and Baroness Hamwee and will place a copy in the House Library.

*With best wishes,  
Cashyn*

**BARONESS CHISHOLM OF OWLPEN**

Lord Rosser  
House of Lords