



Lord Hope of Craighead  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

MoJ ref: SUB92504

26 November 2021

Dear Lord Hope,

### CLAUSE 165 OF THE PCSC BILL – BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (BSL) INTERPRETERS

I am writing in response to an issue you raised on the provision of BSL interpreters in courts during the committee stage of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill on Wednesday 17 November 2021.

You referred to a survey by the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) and proposals they made in a report, *Enabling Jury Service*, which was published in February 2018. This included the recommendation that consideration should be given to amending legislation to enable the presence of additional approved persons in the jury room during deliberations and prescribing a specific form of additional oath for this purpose.

You made the point that no steps have been taken to amend the legislation to enable these recommendations to be put into effect and suggested that we should make inquiries as to why.

My officials have raised this with officials in the Scottish Government and you may find it helpful to know the outcome of those discussions. In 2017 the Scottish Government commissioned research on jury decision making which considered the SCTS Report and its recommendations. This research was published in late 2019, and engagement took place across the country throughout 2020. However, further consideration of the recommendations in light of the findings of the research, was inevitably delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Scottish Government have yet to determine next steps as their focus remains on the justice recovery programme. We will, of course, keep in touch with them.

I hope that this answers the question that you raised, and I am happy to meet to discuss this matter further. I will be placing a copy of this letter in the House of Lords library.

Yours sincerely,

LORD (DAVID) WOLFSON  
OF TREDEGAR, QC