



Ministry  
of Justice

Sir Robert Neill  
Chair of the Justice Select Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

The Right Honourable  
**Alex Chalk KC MP**  
Lord Chancellor & Secretary  
of State for Justice

**MoJ ref:** 108320

25 August 2023

Dear Sir Bob,

### **WHOLE LIFE ORDER ANNOUNCEMENT**

I am writing to inform you of reforms to the application of Whole Life Orders (WLO) which I plan to announce this Sunday, 27 August.

I intend to legislate to provide that WLOs should be mandatory in circumstances which currently attract a WLO as the starting point, as set out in paragraph 2(2) of Schedule 21 to the Sentencing Act 2020, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The meaning and scope of the phrase 'exceptional circumstances' will remain a matter for the judiciary.

Making WLOs mandatory in those cases will demonstrate the Government's commitment to ensuring that those guilty of the worst crimes are appropriately punished.

I am also announcing our intention to legislate to provide that murders of a single victim involving sexual or sadistic conduct should be subject to a mandatory WLO unless there are exceptional circumstances.

These proposals will apply to England and Wales only.

I intend to legislate at the earliest opportunity, and I welcome continued engagement with you and the wider Committee during the development of these measures. I am placing a copy of this letter in the library of the House.

Yours sincerely,

**RT HON ALEX CHALK KC MP**

**LORD CHANCELLOR AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR JUSTICE**