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19 March 2014

Dear Linda

**SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION S4W- 19515
COURT REPORTERS ON CHILD WELFARE ISSUES**

The Cabinet Secretary in his response to the above PQ indicated that it relates to operational matters within the responsibility of the Scottish Court Service corporate body. I am now writing to you in response to the matter you have raised.

S4W-19515 asks: ...further to the answer to question S4W-18819 by Roseanna Cunningham on 9 January 2014, what target date it has set for all court reporters on child welfare issues to be assessed in accordance with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme.

As indicated by the Cabinet Secretary in his response, reporters already appointed and/or engaged by the court prior to 28 February 2011 to undertake reporting work with children now have until 29 October 2015 to become members of the PVG scheme. This date has been agreed between Scottish Government and Disclosure Scotland. Those reporters may continue to supply this service to the court during this period.

Notwithstanding the above target date, members of SCS staff, in support of the Sheriffs Principal, have been actively promoting PVG membership and only a small proportion of those reporters in each sheriffdom remain to sign up. In the Court of Session all reporters currently engaged by the Court in this capacity are members of the scheme.

Individuals coming forward with a view to providing this service to the court for the first time make application to the Sheriff Principal. They are required to become members of the PVG scheme before being authorised to undertake this function.

A copy of this letter will be placed in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre and published on the Scottish Court Service website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'E' followed by a horizontal line.

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