

Dame Vera Baird QC
Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales

Office of the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales
5th Floor, 70 Petty France
London SW1H 9EX

e: victims.commissioner@victimscommissioner.org.uk

Tom Pursglove, MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Copied to members of the Victims' Panel
Via email

28 January 2022

Dear Tom

Victims' Panel

The Ministry of Justice set up an excellent Victims' Panel in 2017. [The Victims' Panel](#) brought together those with lived experience of crime and experts in victim support with the objectives of advising and assisting the Ministry of Justice in its aim to support victims within the criminal justice system. In particular to:

- represent the voice of victims and provide victim focused views on specific areas of the MoJ's work, including consultations;
- identification of victims' issues for the MoJ to consider when developing or implementing policy;
- monitor the delivery of the Victims Strategy and highlight key themes/issues the Government needs to tackle in line with the vision set out in the Victims Strategy.

The Victims' Panel is perfectly in line with the aims set out in the Victims' Bill consultation to amplify victims' voices and ensure that they are heard. Indeed, the Panel is likely to be helpful to the department in developing the Bill as it moves through the parliamentary process.

The terms of reference for the Panel specify that meetings will take place quarterly. However, the Panel has not met for some time – since 2019. Members understood that this was initially because of challenges presented by COVID. However, as we have all become familiar with online meetings and as restrictions are eased, it is not clear why meetings have not resumed. I have received a number of queries asking when the Panel will restart and, if there are no plans for a future meeting, what will otherwise happen to it.

I have agreed to write on behalf of Panel members, of which I am one, to raise these questions with you. Please can you advise the members of the Victims' Panel on your plans for taking it forward?

Our usual practice, in the interests of transparency, is to publish our correspondence on our website shortly after sending unless there is reason not to do so.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V Baird', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dame Vera Baird QC
Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales