



Ministry
of Justice

Tom Pursglove MP
Minister for Justice and
Tackling Illegal Migration

OFFICIAL

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

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11 March 2022

Dear Dame Vera,

VICTIMS' PANEL

Thank you for your letter dated 28th January 2022. I greatly appreciated hearing from you on the work of the Victims' Panel. Since 2014, the Panel has played an invaluable role in informing victim policy, and I would like to thank you for your role as part of it.

It is a key priority for the Government to amplify victims' voices and ensure that they are heard. As part of the Victims' Bill consultation, we carried out wide-ranging engagement directly with victims. This included a series of 19 engagement events with victims which received excellent feedback from stakeholders. More than 50% of official responses to the consultation were also received from victims and members of the public. In addition to this, over the last 2 years the Victim and Witness Silver Command has played a highly effective, much-valued role in representing victims and the sector as we responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Continuing this engagement will play a crucial role in developing the Bill as it moves through the parliamentary process. It will also enable me to hear directly from victims on the issues which are most important to them in shaping policy more widely. In support of this goal, I will shortly be writing to Victims' Panel members to announce that we will be re-starting quarterly meetings, with a first meeting to be organised before Easter 2022. I will offer members the opportunity to extend their tenure to 2023, in light of the pause of meetings over the COVID period.

I hope that this is helpful in clarifying my intentions going forward.

Yours sincerely,

TOM PURSGLOVE MP