



Ministry of Justice

Dame Vera Baird QC & Nicole Jacobs
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By Email Only

The Right Honourable
Dominic Raab MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of
State for Justice

MoJ ref: ADR97320

4 July 2022

Dear Vera and Nicole,

BILL OF RIGHTS

Thank you for your letter dated 10 June 2022, regarding the Bill of Rights and its impact on the rights of victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

This Government was elected with a manifesto commitment to 'update the Human Rights Act... to ensure there is a proper balance between the rights of individuals, our vital national security and effective government'. It has been in force for over 20 years now and it is entirely right that we should seek to update it. We need to make sure that our human rights framework continues to meet the needs of the society it serves. That is why I introduced the Bill of Rights to Parliament on 22 June.

This country has a long and proud tradition of freedom which our Bill of Rights will enhance, for example, in respect of free speech and recognition of the role of jury trial. Our reforms will curtail the abuses of human rights, restore some common sense to our justice system, and ensure that our human rights framework meets the needs of the society it serves. The Bill of Rights will also strengthen protection of victims in a range of ways, for example the provisions that relate to the deportation of foreign national criminals, and the emphasis the Bill gives to public protection in support of our parole reforms. To be clear: far from weakening the position of victims, the Bill of Rights will reinforce key safeguards.

As we make these reforms, we are clear that we are committed to remaining party to the ECHR and the Bill incorporates all of the rights in the Human Rights Act. In relation to the application of positive obligations on public authorities, in future our courts will consider a range of factors when applying existing positive obligations rights such as the police's own expertise in managing resources. This will enable operational experts to exercise their judgment in deciding how best to serve the public, rather than having to act to mitigate costly litigation.

Regarding the experiences of victims, the Victims' Code sets out in clear terms what support they can, and should, expect from the criminal justice system, and how the relevant agencies best serve the public with regard to victims' entitlements. But what your letter points out, and the responses we received to our *Delivering justice for victim's* consultation were clear on, is that victims are not always aware of these entitlements, or get them. That is why the Victims Bill and wider package will amplify victim's voices, improve support to victims and strengthen oversight of

criminal justice agencies. The Bill will also enshrine the Victims Code in law to increase awareness of the Code and together with the measures to enhance oversight of its delivery, send a signal to the criminal justice agencies that they must deliver these entitlements for victims.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dominic Raab', with a stylized flourish at the end.

RT HON DOMINIC RAAB MP