



Joint Committee on Human Rights

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From Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP, Chair

Lucy Frazer QC MP

Minister of State for Justice

By Email.

22 July 2020

Dear Lucy

Thank you for your letter dated 30 June, confirming that between 30 and 35 women have been released from prison during the lockdown period, up to 19 June. We remain concerned that this is very slow progress. It is disappointing that we still have no data on the total numbers of women in prison who are primary carers. This makes it impossible to assess effectively the data on early release of women from prison.

During the evidence session on 8 June, you mentioned that the provision of safe accommodation has been a barrier to the release of mothers from prison during lockdown. We would be grateful if you could provide us with the evidence to demonstrate the lack of appropriate accommodation for women leaving prison, and explain what further efforts have been made to secure such accommodation.

In addition to those mothers who were in prison prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 and the imposition of the lockdown, we are also concerned that there may be new entrants to the prison system who are also primary carers and who can no longer see their children due to blanket visiting restrictions. We would be grateful if you could share with us any available data on the number of mothers who have been sent to prison during the lockdown period.

Finally, we would be grateful if you could provide us with an update on the progress that is being made to ensure all mothers in prison have access to video-call technology in order to maintain contact with their children.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP

Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights