



HOUSE OF LORDS

The Rt Hon the Baroness Stowell of Beeston MBE
Chair of the Select Committee on Communications and Digital
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Matthew Hill
Chief Executive
Legal Services Board
3rd Floor, The Rookery
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11 September 2023

Dear Mr Hill,

Thank you for your letter dated 1 August 2023.

We are pleased to hear that you are taking the issue of SLAPPs seriously. As you are aware, the Government is introducing a range of legislative measures including a statutory definition and early dismissal test for SLAPPs related to economic crime. However, these are not a panacea. The scope is limited and many SLAPPs cases do not make it to court: they succeed by intimidating critics at an early stage. Proactive work from the regulators is therefore essential in preventing further abuses of our legal system.

Your upcoming work will play an important part in identifying options for addressing SLAPPs. We would be particularly interested in measures that provide an ongoing and meaningful deterrent. Examples may include the proactive use of spot checks, investigations and information-gathering powers; swift engagement with those who believe they are facing a SLAPP case that may breach professional ethics guidelines or rules; and financial and non-financial penalties for wrongdoing. We would be grateful for further updates on your work and responses from the relevant regulators once it is under way.

Thank you again for drawing this to our attention.

Yours sincerely,

BARONESS STOWELL OF BEESTON