



Ministry
of Justice

Laura Farris MP
Minister for Victims and
Safeguarding

Sir Robert Neill KC (Hon) MP, Chair
Justice Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

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Dear Sir Bob,

INCREASE TO THE FEES THAT QUALIFIED LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES (QLRs) CAN CLAIM

I am writing to update you about the Qualified Legal Representative (QLR) scheme and the ongoing work the Government is doing to ensure it is implemented effectively.

As you will know, the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) banned unrepresented alleged perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in specified family and civil proceedings, and vice versa. The Government's QLR scheme allows the courts, at a judge's discretion, to appoint a QLR to undertake cross-examination in the interests of the prohibited party. This is critical to ensuring that victims and other vulnerable witnesses are not retraumatised at court as a result of being cross-examined by their alleged perpetrator.

On 2 January 2024, we introduced an expenses policy that allows QLRs to claim for costs incurred, such as transport and accommodation, when they have travelled outside their local area to take on QLR work. We introduced this policy in direct response to stakeholder feedback, to ensure that QLRs are being appropriately remunerated for their travel, and to incentivise more QLRs to take up this important work.

I am pleased to inform you that we are making a substantial further investment into the Scheme. On 10 May 2024, we will be amending secondary legislation to increase the fees that QLRs can claim by 10%, excluding VAT and any claimable expenses. The increase will come into force from 31 May 2024, and we hope it will encourage more legal professionals to participate in this work.

We are also introducing a new fixed fee that will allow QLRs to claim payment for their preparatory work in the event of their appointment being terminated by the court, prior to the hearing. Revised guidance on the fee scheme will be published when the legislation comes into force.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support of the QLR scheme.

Yours sincerely

LAURA FARRIS MP