



The Rt Hon. the Lord Foster of Bath
Chair, Justice and Home Affairs Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

18 June 2025

Dear Lord Foster,

STRATEGIC LITIGATION AGAINST PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

I am writing to inform you that the Government has today commenced sections 194 and 195 of the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (ECCTA), which are designed to tackle Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) claims related to economic crime. This marks a significant first step in addressing this abusive practice, which employs intimidation tactics to silence individuals exercising their right to free speech on matters of public interest.

This Government understands the profound financial and psychological impact SLAPPs have on victims, and their effect on our legal system and society. They curtail free speech, have a chilling effect on public interest journalism and pose a threat to our democracy.

Section 194 of ECCTA mandates the introduction of new procedural rules to implement a bespoke early dismissal mechanism for SLAPPs without sufficient merit and provide costs protection for defendants where cases do proceed to trial. The Civil Procedure Rule Committee approved amendments to the Civil Procedure Rules to fulfil this requirement. These are included in the Civil Procedure (Amendment) Rules 2025, which were laid before Parliament on 3 February 2025. These Civil Procedure Rules amendments in relation to SLAPPs also come into force today.

Additionally, Section 195 of the Act introduces a statutory definition of economic crime-related SLAPPs. Sections 194 and 195 of the ECCTA and the amendments to the Civil Procedural Rules are now in effect, providing additional protections for individuals facing claims that meet the statutory definition.

While this is a positive first step, it is important to clarify that the Government is considering its future approach to comprehensively addressing all SLAPPs — not just those related to economic crime. This future strategy will be informed by insights gained from the operation of the ECCTA.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

SARAH SACKMAN KC MP
Minister Of State