



Joint Committee on Human Rights

Addressed to Minister Jake Richards MP
Ministry of Justice
[Delivered by email]

05 February 2026

JOINT COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS – EVIDENCE SESSION 3 DECEMBER

Dear Minister Richards,

Thank you for coming to discuss with the Committee your ongoing work last December, and for your detailed reply to many of the Committee's questions on 14 January 2026. There were two further areas in which the Committee would like to request further clarification and detail.

First-tier immigration tribunals – publication of decisions

You mentioned in your response that publishing 'decisions from the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber)' will have operational and resource implications. We are currently assessing the possible timing, funding and resources required for different publishing routes. [...] Any decision to publish will be made in consultation with the judiciary and announced in due course.' I would like to ask that you clarify the status of this consultation, as we have heard varying information from a range of sources.

In contrast to the information you provided in this letter, the Committee understood that a commitment to publish these decisions was announced in the Lady Chief Justice's recent annual report:

Work on publishing judgments from the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) has moved from setting principles to planning how it will work in practice. In partnership with HMCTS, the Board is reviewing the best platforms and processes to make all judgments publicly available. [...] A scoping exercise to guide the full rollout of judgment publication is expected to finish within the next three to six months.¹

In front of the Commons Justice Committee, the Lady Chief Justice similarly affirmed that the judiciary were 'looking at ways of publishing these decisions', adding 'the only thing that has been holding back the publication of transcripts from first-tier tribunal decisions is resources'.² Similarly, in response to Lord Murray's proposed amendment (no. 56) to the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill, Lord Katz stated that there were 'discussions going on between HMCTS, the MoJ and the judiciary about publishing, and in principle the judiciary supports the publication of judgments, but it is in its hands, and it is appropriate that it is its decision to make'.³

¹ Judiciary of England and Wales (2025). *The Lady Chief Justice's Report 2025*. pp. 54-55

² Q1; Justice Committee Oral evidence: Work of the Lady Chief Justice, HC 421 Tuesday 25 November 2025

³ [Hansard HL Deb 5 Nov 2025, Vol 849, Col 2029](#)



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You may appreciate therefore that the Committee feels there has been a lack of clarity as to whether the Government has committed to the publication of judgments, and if so, when we might expect to see the publication of such decisions. Does your Department share our understanding that the judiciary have committed to publishing First-tier tribunal decisions, a decision that lies with them rather than the government? If so, what do you consider is the Government's role in this matter? For example, given the resourcing issue outlined by the Lady Chief Justice, is it possible that plans for publication could be stymied if the Government does not provide the necessary resources to the judiciary?

National protocol on reducing criminalisation of looked-after children

We have recently, on 21 January 2026, held an extremely informative and interesting session with the Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza. The challenges facing the social care system in this country are immense, and we appreciate all the work that she has been doing, in conjunction with the work of your department.

Though we appreciate that a review is ongoing, and that the plans include the important step of listening to those with lived experience of the care and criminal justice systems, we are concerned about the extent to which this will be a sufficient response to the pressing issues currently facing the systems.

We would therefore like to ask if you could provide us with further details on this review, including timelines, stakeholders who will be engaged, and expected outcomes. The Committee is focussed on ensuring the government achieves as many outcomes as possible in the near term so that the immediate issues plaguing the children's social care system and damaging the lives of children and young people are tackled as soon as possible.

Yours Sincerely

Lord Alton of Liverpool
Chair, Joint Committee on Human Rights