

Home Affairs Committee

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From the Committee Chair

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Secretary of State
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
SW1P 4DF

3 November 2021

Dear Home Secretary,

Oral evidence to the Home Affairs Committee

The Committee has discussed the proposal from the Home Office that we postpone our regular oral evidence session with you until the New Year. For many years there has been a pattern in which the Home Affairs Committee has taken oral evidence three times a year, once a term, from the Home Secretary (save in the periods around elections). Other committees, including the Liaison Committee which takes evidence from the Prime Minister, also take evidence at this frequency. Given the serious issues that have developed since July affecting the Home Office, and the wide-ranging work you have been doing, the Committee believes it is important for us to be able to raise these issues with you before Christmas.

We understand that part of the reason this proposal was put forward was due to pressure put on the Department to facilitate multiple Ministerial appearances in the run up to Christmas. In recognition of this, we would like to propose that our oral evidence session with Minister Rachel Maclean, for the inquiry on the 'Investigation and prosecution of Rape', be pushed back to January 2022 in order to support your attendance in December. We hope this would serve the dual purpose of reducing pressure on the Department and providing the new Minister with more time to settle into the brief; we would also welcome the opportunity to consult you at this time on issues relating to our inquiries on rape, and on violence against women and girls, in which we recognise you take a close personal interest. Happily, if Minister Maclean's appearance is deferred, the Committee would also then be in a position to offer you any of the

following three dates in December for your regular appearance: Wednesday 1 December, Wednesday 8 December or Wednesday 15 December.

If none of these dates work with your diary, the Committee is happy to hold the oral evidence session on a day in December outside its regular Wednesday programme. If an alternative date would be preferable, I would like to ensure we can get this date into Members' diaries as early as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yvette Cooper', written in a cursive style.

Yvette Cooper MP