

Dame Vera Baird QC
Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales

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Alex Chalk MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Ministry of Justice
Sent by email

Dear Alex,

Criminal Injuries Compensation

I am following up on correspondence earlier in the year with your predecessor, to ask about progress on the MoJ review of criminal injuries compensation. This was a key piece of work within the government's Victim Strategy.

This review is of particular interest as my predecessor, Baroness Newlove, published her review of criminal injuries compensation in January 2019. It made a number of recommendations and the MoJ response was that these would be considered as part of its own review.

In the meantime, I have been meeting with the CEO of CICA and have been impressed with some of the work they have been doing which aligns with Baroness Newlove's recommendations, for example, sparing victims of sexual assault the trauma of having to describe what happened to them in their application for compensation and providing certain groups of vulnerable victims with a single point of contact. These are positive developments and to be welcomed. Nevertheless, her report raised concerns on a host of other issues, such as automatically precluding victims who have unspent criminal convictions, amending awards to reflect bad conduct and guidance on monies placed in trust.

Furthermore, in my report published in October 2019 on support given to bereaved victims of homicide abroad, I called for this group of victims to be eligible to claim compensation. At present, eligibility is restricted to bereaved

victims of terror attacks abroad, an arbitrary distinction which needs to be addressed. I am hoping your review will indicate whether the government is prepared to accept this recommendation.

It has also come to my attention that the current schedule of payments has not been adjusted in line with inflation since it was introduced in 2012. This means that in practice, the value of the awards is diminishing year on year, and yet the impact of crime on the lives of victims remains the same. I am concerned by this and would ask whether the government has any plans to address this?

In line with my usual practice, a copy of this letter has been placed on my website.

Yours sincerely

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

Dame Vera Baird QC
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