

**Dame Vera Baird QC**  
**Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales**

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Dear Lord Chancellor

I am writing to request your assistance in seeking clarity on the ministerial changes that have occurred over the past few weeks. I am sure that you appreciate that it is a crucial time for many areas of victims' work as the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Bill continues its passage through Parliament and as the Victims' Bill is on the horizon. I was delighted to see that improving victims' experience is a key priority for you and that you are committed to progressing the Victims' Bill. I look forward to working with you on this flagship legislation.

Whilst I understand that it is early days for the new ministerial roles, it is essential that I understand ministerial portfolios and areas of responsibility in order to effectively discharge my role and provide a voice for victims. In particular, I have several pressing matters to discuss regarding digital download and third-party material disclosure that I was at a crucial juncture on, working with Minister Atkins in the Home Office. I require urgent clarity to take these matters forward and would be grateful for your assistance.

We have been informed of Victoria Atkins' role is as Minister of State and Minister for Afghan resettlement at the Ministry of Justice. She will support you on several areas including prison operations, policy and reform, as well as Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) and Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG). She will also be responsible for youth justice, extremism, and the Home Detention Curfew, and Release on Temporary Licence schemes.

We have also been informed that, whilst Minister Atkins is responsible for these areas within the Ministry of Justice, Rachel Mclean is the Safeguarding Minister in the Home Office who remain the lead department on VAWG. Furthermore, we understand that Kit Malthouse no longer has responsibility for victims whilst Tom Pursglove, as a new Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (joint with the Home Office) will support you on victims and witnesses.

I am sure that you can appreciate that this is a complex and somewhat confusing picture for us as we engage on key victims' work. I would welcome clarity and an explanation of these new roles and how they will work together to deliver your priority to improve victims' experiences.

It is particularly urgent that I find out which minister continues work on the PCSC Bill and amending clauses on digital download and third-party material. These amendments are essential to protecting victims' privacy and securing rape convictions in the future and I would be especially grateful for your assistance on this area.

I would also welcome your direction on which minister will take overall responsibility for the implementation of the End-to-End Rape Review as well as guidance on how issues on VAWG will be managed in the future, given the relationship between ministerial appointments and departments. This is a key area of work for my team and it is important to ensure that I can effectively engage with ministers to get the right outcomes for victims.

Finally, I am pleased to have a named Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for victims and witnesses and have written to Tom Pursglove to request a meeting. I would welcome further elaboration on his role and how this will interact with other ministerial responsibilities and teams. I understand that he will be taking the Nationality and Borders Bill through the House of Commons. I would welcome information on who will be leading on the Victims' Bill and whether this will be your role as Lord Chancellor.

As is my regular practice, I will publish this letter on my website.

Kind regards

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

**Dame Vera Baird QC**  
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