

6<sup>th</sup> December 2012

Mr Shane McAteer,  
Committee Clerk,  
Committee for Finance and Personnel,  
Room 428,  
Parliament Buildings,  
Ballymiscaw,  
Stormont,  
Belfast,  
BT4 3XX.

*Dear Shane McAteer*

Following my meeting with the Committee for Finance and Personnel on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012 I would like to provide a brief response in answer to a question asked by Dominic Bradley MLA. During the meeting, Mr Bradley raised the issue that the current Bill does not achieve balance between the rights of victims of trauma and those of ex-prisoners.

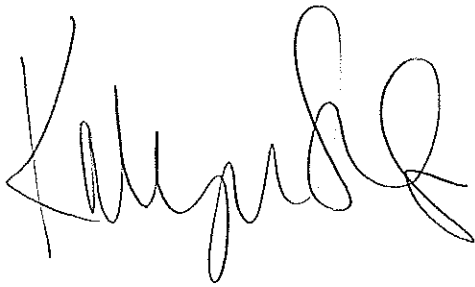
In responding to this query, I returned to the Forum to canvass their views on this issue. The responses from Forum members broadly reflect those expressed by members when I previously asked for their views prior to the Committee meeting. On the particular "clash of rights" issue raised by Mr Bradley, one Forum member expressed the view that, 'it is vital that every applicant for special adviser posts be treated equally under the law...with reference to ex-prisoners my view is that they have served their time and provided they meet the criteria for the post, they should get it.'

Meanwhile, another Forum member commented that, 'I would like politicians to consider victims and the effect any appointment may have on them. I would like them to contact the family concerned prior to the appointment, not to ask their permission but to pre-warn them...before hearing from the media, another source or accidentally at a later date.'

In closing, I would like to repeat the central point that I raised in my opening statement to the Committee. Whether or not the current Bill before the Committee

becomes law, as Commissioner for Victims and Survivor, I would impress upon all Ministers and their respective political parties the imperative of exercising responsibility and display empathy to the plight of all victims and survivors who have been affected by the conflict.

Yours sincerely,

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

Kathryn Stone  
Commissioner