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Ms Christine

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LEGAL AID AND CORONERS' COURTS BILL

Thank you for your letter of 7 April addressed to the Lord Chief Justice.

The Chief Justice welcomes the provision which the Bill will make to appoint him President of the Coroners' Courts in Northern Ireland. This is consistent with his judicial leadership role for other judicial tiers.

The Chief Justice notes the proposal that the Bill be amended to allow the Attorney General to call for papers when considering the exercise of his power to direct an inquest under Section 14 of the Coroners' Act (Northern Ireland) 1959. The Chief Justice has indicated that it would be helpful if, as in England & Wales, the Attorney General made an application to direct an inquest through the High Court. This additional step in the process would be of assistance to the Coroners in allowing for greater understanding of why an inquest was directed.

I hope these comments are helpful. The Chief Justice has asked me to thank the Committee for consulting him.

Yours sincerely

Laurene McAlpine

Ms Christine Darrah
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