

PE1319/GGGG

Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland submission of 19 January 2021

I understand the Public Petitions Committee is due to consider PE1319 on Youth Football again at its meeting on 27 January. I wish to provide the Committee with a short update on the actions taken by my office since publication of the Committee's report in June 2020.

We remain committed to facilitating a meeting between the petitioners, the SFA and the Government. On 2 October 2020 we wrote to the SFA seeking an update on the progress they have made implementing the Committee's recommendations. We received a response on 30 November 2020 (attached). In that letter Mr Maxwell sets out his intention to write to:

"all Club Academy Scotland clubs to seek their views on the recommendations made by the Committee. This will enable me to determine next steps in obtaining the approval of members to the proposed changes to our registration rules."

Our understanding is that this has not yet happened. We have sought to impress upon the SFA the importance of it being able to articulate a clear position on the Committee's recommendations; a meeting in which one of the parties is unable to express a view on the issues is unlikely to be very useful. While we recognise the pressures placed on all organisations by the Covid pandemic, we have therefore urged the SFA to undertake this consultation as swiftly as possible so that a constructive meeting can take place.

As you know, we provided a briefing to MSPs in support of the Committee's debate on 18 November 2020, in which we highlighted the children's rights issues engaged, set out the obligations on the Scottish Government and reiterated our view that children's rights are best protected by law rather than self-regulation.

We have also sought to bring clarity to some of the concerns which we are aware have been raised in the past. You may be aware that we wrote to the Chair of the FIFA Players Status Committee (which has responsibility for monitoring compliance with the FIFA Regulations) on 14 December 2020. We sought the Committee's views on the question of whether the SFA is required by Article 1(2) of those regulations to put in place a scheme which restricts the movement of youth players between professional clubs pending the reimbursement of training costs. We will update the Public Petitions Committee as and when we receive a response.

I look forward to the Committee's discussion on 27 January and am happy to provide any further information you require.