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Lewis Macdonald MSP
Convener
Health & Sport Committee

By Email.

5 February 2021

Dear Lewis,

The [Forensic Medical Services \(Victims of Sexual Offences\) \(Scotland\) Act 2021](#) received Royal Assent on 20 January 2021. I extend my thanks to the Committee for its diligent consideration of and support for the Bill throughout its parliamentary process. I am writing today to make the Committee aware that a consultation document has now been published in relation to the retention period for evidence collected in the course of self-referral forensic medical services. It was agreed by the Parliament during consideration of the Bill that this period would be best set (and, if necessary, adjusted) through secondary legislation. The consultation document asks for views on what that period should be, and offers a Scottish Government proposal of 26 months, for consideration.

The full consultation paper and an easy read consultation paper, produced with People First Scotland, are both available on the Citizen Space web page. The consultation runs until 30 April 2021 and interested people can submit views via the Scottish Government's consultation hub, Citizen Space: <https://consult.gov.scot/equally-safe/equally-safe-retention-period-of-samples/>.

I am also pleased to be able to provide an update on the Advanced Forensic Practice course being delivered at Queen Margaret University and the nurse Sexual Offence Examiner Test of Change (ToC), which I mentioned in the course of the debate on the Bill at stage 3.

The course started on 28 January 2021, and will be conducted virtually until face to face teaching can resume. The Post Graduate qualification will take one year, and will incorporate, as restrictions allow, a range of interactive online learning and teaching methods.

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The Nurse Sexual Offence Examiner ToC, began on 18 January 2021 and the 2 nurses who have been recruited completed day 1 of the virtual Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service required court skills training on 20 January. Day 2 of this training will be delivered face to face when restrictions allow.

I hope this information is helpful but if you require anything further, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

I have copied this letter to the Convenors of the Justice and Equalities and Human Rights Committees, for their interest.

Kind regards,

JEANE FREEMAN

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