

Cabinet Secretary for Justice
Michael Matheson MSP

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Margaret Mitchell MSP
Convenor, Justice Committee
c/o Justice Committee Clerks
Room T2.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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12th April 2017

Dear Margaret,

I am writing to provide an update to the Committee on the commencement of Part 1 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016.

I wrote to you in August 2016 informing the Justice Committee that we were working towards commencing Part 1 in the summer of 2017. I can now confirm that my intention is to commence Part 1 on 20 July 2017.

Since I provided the update to you in August 2016 there has been significant work carried out by criminal justice partners in Police Scotland, Crown Office, Scottish Court and Tribunal Service (SCTS) and the Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) to ensure that each organisation is fully prepared for implementation of Part 1 of the Act. The Scottish Government has worked to ensure close cooperation between agencies.

As you know, Part 1 of the Act creates a new arrest and custody regime for suspects and accused persons. This has required significant changes to current practices, guidance materials and IT for Police Scotland and other justice partners..

The extensive preparatory work carried out by each agency will ensure that there is a smooth transition to the new system which is designed to improve Police Scotland's ability to investigate crime, whilst also protecting victims, witnesses, communities and the rights of suspects in police custody.

The Justice Committee may also wish to note that the Scottish Government has hosted a number of stakeholder events in preparing for implementation of Part 1 of

the Act. These have enabled key stakeholders to advise the police on key considerations in developing new procedures and operational guidance.

I hope the above information is helpful to the Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Matheson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MICHAEL MATHESON