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Adam Tomkins MSP
Convener
Justice Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Your ref: **Nil by Mouth**

17 September 2020

Dear Convener

Thank you for your letter of 11 September 2020 following correspondence received by the Committee from Nil by Mouth.

It may be helpful if I first provide some background to the SPFL report.

Following the disorder at the Scottish Cup Final on 21 May 2016, Ministers and officials had extensive discussions with the SPFL and the Scottish FA to consider how best to respond to the long-standing issue of unacceptable conduct in Scottish football highlighted by the shameful scenes at Hampden. As a result, the football authorities strengthened their rules and articles on unacceptable conduct and also agreed to collate information on incidents for the first time.

To allow us to gain a better understanding of the true scale of the problem and therefore properly consider what additional measures may be required, we emphasised to the SPFL and the Scottish FA that data on incidents in grounds was required. Following discussions, this data was then collated – drawn from delegates' reports – from the start of the 2017/18 football season and provided to the Scottish Government for internal use only. Following a recent ruling by the Information Commissioner, some of the information held by the Scottish Government was released.

The information collated by the SPFL is drawn from delegates' reports and gives a helpful indication of the wide range of incidents classed as unacceptable conduct in a football stadium. It was never intended to replace accredited Police Scotland statistics on sectarian incidents, as it was looking at a wider range of incidents and using a different methodology.

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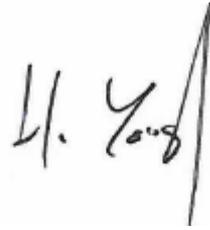


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We remain fully committed to tackling all kinds of unacceptable behaviour in our football grounds and the wider community. And we are continuing to work with the football authorities, clubs and other partners to consider what further action may be needed to address this long-standing issue.



HUMZA YOUSAF

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