



Ministry  
of Justice

**Tom Pursglove MP**  
Minister of State for the  
Home Office and  
Ministry of Justice

Dame Vera Baird QC  
Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales  
Office of the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales  
5th Floor, 70 Petty France  
London SW1H 9EX

**MoJ ref:** ADR 95985

26 July 2022

Dear Dame Vera,

### **ACCESS TO SENTENCING REMARKS FOR MENTALLY DISORDERED OFFENDERS**

Thank you for your letter of 15 March on behalf of Julian Hendy, CEO of the charity 'Hundred Families'. I know that Mr. Hendy is concerned that the process for obtaining Judges' Sentencing Remarks (JSR) is inconsistent and not always straightforward. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Information and guidance for staff on the provision of the JSR for the family of victims in homicide cases is set out in Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) 'Crown Court Manual'. The manual is published internally only. Although there is a written procedure in place, unfortunately such procedures can sometimes be inadvertently overlooked. Prompted by your letter, HMCTS has undertaken to remind court officials of this process through its internal communication channel "Need to Know".

I am pleased to report that the Mental Health Casework Section within Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service is aiming to finalise guidance to Victim Liaison Officers (VLO) later this month. This guidance will provide details of how VLOs can request sentencing remarks for restricted patients.

HMCTS does have an existing process whereby family members without a VLO can apply for a transcript of the JSR using Form EX107. HMCTS acknowledges that this process is cumbersome and too complex and that a better system needs to be put in place. There is a degree of complexity involved in such a process change, not least because it is not an internal process for HMCTS. HMCTS has undertaken to complete this work by the autumn.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to write and I trust that this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**