The Rt Hon David Gauke MP
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ

7 February 2019

Re: Press reports about limited sitting days for recorders

My Committee colleagues and I were concerned to read a report on the CBA website that states:

“Recorders have been receiving letters telling them that due to severe budgetary constraints there will be very limited opportunities for them to sit (and therefore complete the mandatory number of sitting days) in the Crown Court for the time being.”

Can you please tell us, within two weeks from the date of this letter:

1. Have such letters indeed been sent?
2. If so, is it right to assume that they were sent by or on behalf of, HMCTS?
3. Are these letters being sent to Recorders across the country or is this issue confined to certain Circuits – and if so which?
4. What is the position of Recorders who are unable to complete the mandatory number of sitting days through no fault of their own but because HMCTS cannot offer them sufficient days?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Bob Neill MP
Chair