I am writing as I know you have an interest in the review of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme as the Chair of the Justice Select Committee, and I wished to update you on developments. I am pleased to be able to confirm that we will be laying a Written Ministerial Statement on Tuesday 18th to make public the Terms of Reference for the review.

As you will know, the review is examining whether the Scheme remains fit for purpose, reflects the changing nature of violent crime, and effectively supports victims in their recovery. In response to some of the concerns that have been raised, my officials are looking at:

- The scope of the Scheme, including the definition of violent crime for the purposes of compensation for injury, and the type of injuries that are covered by the Scheme.
- The eligibility rules including, inter alia, concerns about time limits for making applications, unspent convictions, and consent in sexual offences cases.
- The requirements of the Scheme in relation to decision-making, such as the level of evidence required for compensation claims, and the timeframes for accepting or rejecting awards.
- The value and composition of awards available through the Scheme, including the balance struck between serious and less serious physical and mental injuries.
- The impact of the Scheme on particular groups of victims, including victims of child sexual abuse and victims of terrorism.
- Opportunities to simplify the Scheme.
- The affordability and financial sustainability of the Scheme.

As we take forward the review, we will seek to ensure that compensation is protected for those most seriously affected by their injuries, and that the Scheme continues to offer support for victims of violent crime who have been unable to seek compensation by other means. While no amount of money can ever repair the harm done to an individual through violent crime, I am clear that compensation offers an important public acknowledgment for victims of the harm they have suffered, and can, alongside victim
support services and other practical and emotional assistance, help victims of violent crime to start to rebuild their lives.

The review focuses on the Scheme, and we will not be assessing the performance of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority. Measures were introduced through the Victims Strategy to deal with immediate concerns around the handling of victims’ claims, and these continue to be taken forward by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority.

We will be engaging extensively with stakeholders in the new year, and intend to publish a full consultation in 2019.

We also committed in the Victims Strategy to removing the pre-1979 “same roof rule” from the Scheme, which prevents a compensation award being made for a criminal injury sustained by a child or adult before 1979 if, at the time of the incident giving rise to that injury, the applicant (as a child or adult) and the assailant were living together as members of the same family. I confirmed on 10 December in response to a Written Question that we will be laying an amended Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2012 before Parliament in due course, which will remove the “same roof rule”. Victims whose applications for compensation had previously been refused under this rule will be able to reapply to the Scheme, although they will still need to meet all the remaining criteria to be eligible for an award.

I value your views on the Scheme, and look forward to hearing from you again as we continue to take forward the review.

EDWARD ARGAR MP