



Work and Pensions Committee

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From the Chair

8 April 2019

Will Quince MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance

Department for Work and Pensions

Dear Will,

McLaughlin Supreme Court ruling

Many congratulations on your appointment.

I wrote to your predecessor, Justin Tomlinson MP, on 5 September 2018 and 19 November 2018 about the Supreme Court's judgment in the McLaughlin case ([2018] UKSC 48). In response, on 4 December 2018, he stated that officials were developing potential options for change in response to the ruling.

In a Westminster Hall debate on 23 January this year, your predecessor stated that he was still "carefully considering the McLaughlin court ruling" and "actively considering all options". In particular, he said that the Department was looking at the option—common in many European countries—of making children, rather than parents, eligible for bereavement benefits. That would be one way of resolving the current injustice, in which children suffer simply because their parents were not married.

As you will know, the McLaughlin judgment was delivered on 30 August 2018, over seven months ago. The Committee is launching an inquiry into bereavement benefits, including the operation of the Bereavement Support Payment and the implications of the McLaughlin judgment. Please could you therefore update the Committee on how the Government intends to respond to the judgement?

With best wishes and I look forward to hearing from you,

Rt Hon Frank Field MP
Chair