



Ministry
of Justice

Lucy Frazer QC MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of
State for Justice

Rt. Hon. Maria Miller MP
Chair, Women and Equalities Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

21 June 2018

Dear Maria

VOYEURISM (OFFENCES) (NO.2) BILL

We have today introduced the Voyeurism (Offences) (No.2) Bill in the House of Commons to create two new offences to make the reprehensible behaviour of "upskirting" a specific criminal offence. In recent years, we have consistently taken action to tackle sexual abuse and violence in all its forms. It has become apparent, however, that a small but important gap in the law exists around "upskirting". We are aware that the Committee have an interest in the legislation given your current inquiry into the sexual harassment of women and girls in public places.

As you may be aware, Wera Hobhouse MP introduced a Private Members Bill on 6 March to specifically criminalise "upskirting". As the Bill did not make immediate progress through that process, the government has decided to bring forward this Bill to ensure that these important changes are on the statute as soon as possible.

As members will see, the Bill mirrors closely the measures introduced by Wera Hobhouse MP and the Scottish offences by inserting two new offences into the Sexual Offences Act 2003 for instances where a person operates equipment or records an image under another person's clothing with the intention of viewing, or enabling another person to view, their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear). We have closely consulted with Wera on the proposed reforms, in particular seeking her support for additional provisions in the Bill that will impose notification requirements (commonly referred to as the sex offenders' register) for the most serious offenders, which is an important safeguarding measure.

We want to act quickly to address this gap, and I am very pleased with the level of cross-party work and support we have already seen. I am aware that there are a number of other questions and debates about the wider sexual offences regime and we keep this area of law under review.

I am very grateful for the Committee's work on this important issue and for your support going forward.

Yours sincerely

LUCY FRAZER QC MP