



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

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

19 April 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

Cost of Court Transcripts

We are writing to you regarding the cost of obtaining court transcripts and to urge the Government to make provisions in the Victims' Bill to ensure victims are able to access these transcripts free of charge.

Victims are often charged thousands of pounds to obtain a transcript of Crown Court proceedings. Juliana Terlizzi was quoted £7,500 to obtain a transcript of the 10-day trial in which she was a victim of rape, whilst another victim has been quoted an astonishing £22,000.

We are pleased that the Ministry of Justice acknowledges that “accessing transcripts from proceedings in serious criminal cases is not only a fundamental right of victims but is also essential for maintaining transparency and accountability within the justice system”.¹ However, at present, the cost of obtaining a transcript of court proceedings is a major barrier to justice for many victims and bereaved families.

Victims routinely do not attend trial. Some are actively discouraged from attending, whilst others face the prospect of having to sit by the defendant's family and friends in the courtroom should they do so.

Without a transcript of court proceedings, victims are unable to find out exactly what happened during the trial which can make it very difficult for them to come to terms with how the verdict was reached.

Existing provisions in place to make transcripts available - such as providing a transcript at the Judge's discretion or publishing sentencing remarks in certain cases - are insufficient or unaffordable. Not only is this a barrier to justice, it is also a major barrier to victims' recovery.

Victims and campaigners have long been calling on the Government to take action to address this injustice, but no progress has been made. Meanwhile, the Scottish Government has committed to a pilot scheme to waive court transcript fees for victims of sexual violence.

We therefore urge you, the Secretary of State for Justice make provisions in the Victims' Bill

to enable all crime victims to request a transcript of the court's summing up and sentencing remarks, so long as the trial took place in a court where the proceedings are recorded.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Olney
Member of Parliament for Richmond Park

Co-signed by charities/organisations:

Ciara Bergman - CEO, Rape Crisis England & Wales

Jess Eagleton's - Head of Policy, Public Affairs and Research, Refuge

Joanne Early- CEO, Sann National

Sophie Francis-Cansfield - Head of External Affairs, Women's Aid

Heidi Riedel – CEO, Woman's Trust

Anthea Sully – Chief Executive, White Ribbon UK

Harriet Wistrich - Director Centre for Women's Justice

Parliamentarians:

Apsana Begum MP

Peter Bottomley MP

Ian Bryne MP

Alistair Carmichael MP

Wendy Chamberlain MP

Sarah Champion MP

Daisy Cooper MP

Stella Creasy MP

Allan Dorans MP

Sarah Dyke MP

Tim Farron MP

Richard Foord MP

Michael Fabricant MP

Sarah Green MP

Wera Hobhouse MP

Sharon Hodgson MP

Christine Jardine MP

Kim Johnson MP

Ben Lake MP

Julian Lewis MP

Emma Lewell-Buck MP

Caroline Lucas MP

John McDonnell MP

Layla Moran MP

Charlotte Nichols MP

Kirsten Oswald MP

Jess Phillips MP

Yasmin Qureshi MP

Liz Saville Roberts MP

Jamie Stone MP

Valerie Vaz MP

Mick Whitley MP

Munira Wilson MP

Baroness Brinton

Baroness Burt of Solihull

Lord Russell of Liverpool

1. Written Question, UIN 197500, 4 Septemeber 2023: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-09-04/197500>