

The Rt Hon David Lidington  
 Secretary of State for Justice  
 Ministry of Justice  
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 London SW1H 9AJ

15 June 2017

Dear Rt Hon David Lidington MP,

I would like to congratulate you on your recent appointment as Secretary of State for Justice.

As you know, on 4 May the UK received 227 recommendations from other countries in the five-year Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council (UN doc: [A/HRC/WG.6/27/L.7](#)).

Next September the Government will be expected to notify the United Nations what recommendations will be voluntarily accepted by the UK, which will have to be implemented in the coming years.

In the light of the UK's longstanding commitment to human rights both at home and internationally, I encourage you to accept and implement all of these recommendations.

In particular, I would like to draw your attention to those that stressed some of the Concluding Observations made by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its review of the UK in June 2016 (UN doc: [E/C.12/GBR/CO/6](#)).

Universal Periodic Review – 2017	Concluding Observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – 2016
<p>134.7. <b>Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</b>, the Optional Protocol to Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Portugal);</p> <p>134.16. Ratify the <a href="#">Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</a> (Spain);</p>	<p>69. The Committee encourages the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.</p>
<p>134.154. Ensure the accessibility of appropriate</p>	<p>21. The Committee recommends that the State</p>

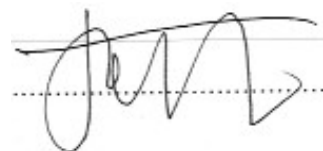
<p><b>legal aid</b> to safeguard access to justice for all, particularly for the most marginalized groups in society (Netherlands);</p>	<p>party review the impact of the reforms to the legal aid system with a view to ensuring access to justice and the provision of free legal aid services, in particular for disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups. The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State party on the ongoing review of the employment tribunal fees and recommends the elimination of such fees.</p>
<p>134.168. Develop clear national strategies for the eradication of the <b>poverty</b> of about four million <b>children</b>, as indicate in the United Kingdom UPR Summary report of the Stakeholders submissions (Syrian Arab Republic);</p> <p>134.191. Increase efforts to eliminate child poverty and bring domestic legislation in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Hungary);</p> <p>134.192. Increase Government efforts to eradicate child poverty, and in this regard undertake an assessment of the impact of the welfare reform on children from disadvantaged families (Kazakhstan);</p>	<p>48. (...) The Committee also urges the State party to develop a comprehensive child poverty strategy and reinstate the targets and reporting duties on child poverty. (...)</p>
<p>134.169. Further strengthen its '<b>Equality Act</b>', in particular, to provide better health services to groups in vulnerable situations including migrants (Sri Lanka);</p>	<p>23. The Committee recommends that the State party bring into force the relevant provisions of the Equality Act that refer to the public authorities' duty with respect to socioeconomic disadvantage, as well as with respect to the prohibition of intersectional discrimination, in order to enhance and guarantee full and effective protection against discrimination in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. The Committee recalls its previous recommendation (see <a href="#">E/C.12/GBR/CO/5</a>, para. 16) and urges the State party to provide the same access to an independent equality body and a similar level of protection to rights holders with regard to all grounds of discrimination for all individuals in all jurisdictions of the State party, including Northern Ireland. In this respect, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to its <a href="#">general comment No. 20</a> (2009) on non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights.</p>
<p>134.170. Ensure that the law governing <b>access to abortion in Northern Ireland</b> fully complies with</p>	<p>62. The Committee recommends that the State party amend the legislation on termination of</p>

<p>international human rights law, by decriminalising abortion and ensuring access to abortion in cases of severe and fatal foetal anomalies and where the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest (Iceland)</p> <p>134.171. Take necessary measures to provide reproductive healthcare services for women and girls in line with its CEDAW obligations (Myanmar);</p> <p>134.172. Ensure that the law governing access to abortion in Northern Ireland fully complies with international human rights law, by decriminalizing abortion and ensuring access to abortion in cases of severe and fatal foetal anomalies and where the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest (Sweden);</p> <p>134.173. Encourage the devolved government of Northern Ireland to align its legal framework on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and its reproductive health services with the rest of the United Kingdom (Canada);</p> <p>134.174. Step up efforts to promote racial equality and social inclusion in the education system in Northern Ireland (Botswana);</p>	<p>pregnancy in Northern Ireland to make it compatible with other fundamental rights, such as women’s rights to health, life and dignity. In this respect, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to its <a href="#">general comment No. 22 (2016)</a> on the right to sexual and reproductive health.</p>
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I very much hope that the Government will engage with civil society organisations towards the acceptance of the highest number of recommendations.

In particular I would appreciate it if you could let us know whether the Government intends to accept and implement the recommendations listed above from the Universal Periodic Review.

Yours sincerely,



Jamie Burton  
Just Fair Chair