

Cabinet Secretary for Commonwealth Games, Sport, Equalities and Pensioners' Rights
Shona Robison MSP



T: 0845 774 1741
E: scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

David Stewart MSP
Convenor
Public Petitions Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World



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Dear David,

PE1521: No More Page 3 in the Scottish Sun and Scottish Parliament

Thank you for your letter dated 18 June 2014, regarding petition number 1521 currently open with the Petitions Committee.

As you will no doubt be aware however, the Scottish Parliament debated this issue on 6 November 2013, where a motion was passed in support of the No More Page 3 Campaign. During the debate, I welcomed cross party support for the issue, and remarked that Page 3 formed part of everyday sexist behaviour, which affects the lives of women in Scotland daily. I applauded the work of the No More Page 3 campaign and recognised its efforts to encourage thousands of women and men to take a stand against negative, demeaning and limiting portrayals of women.

The Scottish Government believes that eradicating violence against women is vital to the success of Scotland as a nation and our commitment has been demonstrated by our allocation of funding which is the best in the UK, and our strategic approach to this work, most notably in our recent publication of "Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls".

One of the key strands of our approach is to reduce violence against women and girls by reducing gender inequality. This includes addressing negative portrayals of women in our society and we would encourage all parts of the media to focus on promoting the many contributions of women in our society, while also respecting the well-established principle that it remains for newspapers themselves to determine their content.

As you may be aware, this principle was enshrined within the Royal Charter on self-regulation of the press, which was formalised on 30 October 2013, and to which

Scottish Ministers gave their agreement, reflecting the Scottish Parliament's unanimous motion mandating them to agree to such a Charter.

I would therefore like to restate my commitment to the campaign and its commitment in turn towards the principle of voluntary removal, awareness raising and in reducing tolerance levels for the objectification of women.

With this in mind, I would also urge the Sun newspaper to consider reevaluating Page 3, and reaffirm the Scottish Government's commitment to a vision of Scotland where all media outlets have a role in reducing unhelpful attitudes and depictions of women.

I hope this information is of use to you, and petitioners.

SHONA ROBISON