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**TRANSFORMING LEGAL AID CONSULTATION: CIVIL JUSTICE PROPOSALS**

Thank you for your letter of 31 July 2013 concerning the Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) inquiry into the consultation *Transforming Legal Aid: delivering a more credible and efficient system*. I note that you have asked me to pause until the JCHR reports its findings. I'm afraid it will not be possible to heed to this request for reasons that I outlined in my letter sent to the JCHR today.

The decision to accelerate the next tranche of legal aid reforms was taken because of the acute need to continue to bear down on the costs of legal aid against a backdrop of continuing pressure on public finances, and to address questions of public confidence in the legal aid scheme.

The consultation received approximately 16,000 responses many of which highlighted concerns about the potential impacts of the proposals if they were to be implemented. Please remember that an explicit part of the consultation's purpose was to invite any relevant information to further inform our analysis and better understand the potential impacts of the proposals.

Alongside the Government response to the consultation (due in the autumn) I have also signalled my intention to undertake a short period of *further* consultation on certain changes to the current proposals.

I will work with the JCHR and consider its findings alongside and in addition to the analysis that my officials are undertaking and that is currently well underway, but I will not be able to delay the Transforming Legal Aid timetable.

I would be grateful if you could share my response with the other signatories to your letter.

*With best wishes*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chris Grayling', written in a cursive style.

**CHRIS GRAYLING**