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**THE CHAIRMAN  
MAURA McGOWAN QC**

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The Rt Hon Sir Alan Beith MP  
Chairman, Justice Select Committee  
House of Commons  
Westminster SW1A 0AA

17 October 2013

*Dear Sir Alan,*

**Oral Evidence Session with the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice  
16 October 2013**

I wanted to bring to your, and through your committee's, attention further information regarding a point raised by the Lord Chancellor in the course of yesterday's session regarding fees paid to QCs in Very High Cost Cases (VHCCs).

During his evidence, the Lord Chancellor said:

"In Very High Cost Cases, after we have made the changes, our projection is that in the shorter VHCC cases, the typical ones that are a little over 60 days which require a shorter period of preparation, the typical payment to a QC will be around £135,000. I still think that is a fair reward for the job."

Under the reduced fees proposed by the Ministry of Justice, the Full Day Advocacy rate for a QC on a VHCC case contract is proposed to be £333.20.

So for a 60 day VHCC the QC would be paid £19,992.

If the case was at the highest rate, Category 1 (which are exceptionally rare. There is not one currently underway), a QC is proposed to be paid £101.50 per hour for preparation.

So in order to earn the £135,000 which the Lord Chancellor says is typical, in addition to the trial rate 1,133 hours of preparation would be required.

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If the case was Category 2, a QC is proposed to be paid £79.10 per hour in preparation, which, in addition to the trial fee, would require 1,454 hours of preparation.

If the case was Category 3 or 4 a QC is proposed to be paid £63.70 per hour in preparation, which, in addition to the trial fee, would require 1,805 hours of preparation.

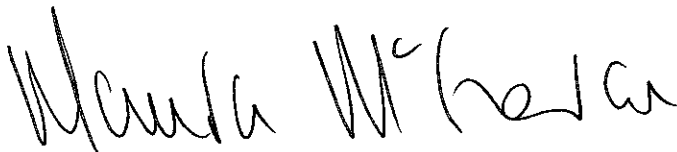
Not only is the £135,000 for a QC in a 60-day trial far from typical; the preparation it entails cannot properly said to be 'short', rather it includes between 1,133 and 1,805 hours.

To give the impression that £135,000 would be paid for 60 days work, is simply not an adequate nor an accurate reflection of the true picture. As set out above, the actual fee for the 60 days, in the most serious cases, for the most experienced practitioners is in fact £19,992. In order to reach the figure set out by the Lord Chancellor, the preparation would be enormous.

I am sure the Lord Chancellor had no intention of misleading the Committee, but it should not be left with the impression that the case he describes is in any way a typical one and I provide this information in that spirit.

In the interests of transparency, I have copied this letter to the Lord Chancellor and will be publishing it on the Bar Council's website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maura McGowan', written in a cursive style.

**Maura McGowan QC**  
**Chairman of the Bar**

cc Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, the Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP  
Nick Walker, Clerk to the Justice Select Committee