

**PE1701/F**

Petitioner submission of 29 August 2019

I welcome the opportunity to provide my response to the evidence that has been submitted.

I welcome the evidence submitted by Adoption UK and the Adoption & Fostering Alliance. These touch of important issues, and I agree that I do not seek for my proposal to be at odds with current adoption legislation that seeks to safeguard children and young people. As organisations who work within the current law, I am aware that their priorities seek to improve the safeguarding of children and existing adoptions. Adoption UK spoke at an event in the Scottish Parliament hosted by Kezia Dugdale MSP on the issue of Adult Adoption and did state that they had numerous enquiries each year about the legal position of adult adoption – suggesting there is a demand far beyond my own.

I also welcome the Law Society of Scotland's evidence which concluded that further research be carried out by the Scottish Law Commission in order to compare legislation and proposals with existing jurisdictions. I would welcome the Committee proposing such research to the Scottish Government and Scottish Law Commission, for which I would be happy to take part in.

Kenneth McK. Norrie's evidence provided me with much hope and information – I had not been aware that adult adoption had previously been legal in Scotland in 1930. Despite the fact he says it would be practically pointless, he does suggest that such a law change would be conceptually competent. My feeling is he has likely not experienced the joy of being brought up by a step-parent, and the deep feeling that adult adoption has brought so many families across the world. A rule-change would not be practically pointless to many families in Scotland, and would also provide hope to many more across the UK who have contacted me to wish me success in the campaign in the hope that the rest of the UK would follow Scotland in any change.

Given Scots law used to contain mechanisms for adult adoption, this proves that there can be a legal basis within Scots law for my proposal.

I believe that adult adoption should and could form part of the wider Family Law reforms that the Scottish Government is currently working on – and it would be easy to insert new clauses to form a new adult adoption order that could bring legal recognition to families such as my own.

Unfortunately, the Scottish Government's response falls far short of compassion for families with step-parents. As I said in my evidence to the Committee, simply changing a name or writing a will does not form the bond or belonging that so many families have told me they want to create – and have seen be created in countries where adult adoption is legal.

I sign up to the notion that Scotland should be the best country to live and grow up in, but simply writing off families with step-parents who are seeking to make a small, but meaningful change is saddening.

I would urge the Committee to continue to look in to this issue, and would be happy to meet again with the Committee to discuss this in more detail. There are many avenues open for action – following the Law Society’s recommendation would seem like a sensible option, whilst investigating possibilities in amending any Family Law Reforms brought forward by the Scottish Government.