Ms Harriet Harman

Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

[write address here]

20/12/2021

Dear Ms Harriet Harman

In the light of The Joint Committee on Human Rights inquiry to understand the experiences of unmarried mothers whose children were adopted between 1949 and 1976, I am writing to request consideration is given to a parallel inquiry into whether current family court decisions are breaching rights to family life.

This letter has been prompted by the case of Victoria Hudson, who campaigns under the banner #JusticeforFCchildren. Victoria has been in family court proceedings since March 2017. In September 2018, Victoria’s daughter (then aged 2) was physically and forcibly removed from her family home and placed under a Care Order with her ex-partner, who is not biologically related to her.

In the ensuing years, Victoria has pursued every avenue for justice available to her. Contact between mother and daughter is now irregular and conducted in circumstances far from tenable towards “enjoying family relationships without interference from government.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Victoria fears her bond with her daughter will be severed, causing irreparable lasting trauma for mother and child.

[Feel free to add your own experiences here, or say something about why you are supporting Victoria]

In her pursuit of justice, Victoria has worked alongside other campaigners to successfully lobby the Government to review unsafe contact orders and the removal of children by the family courts. The resulting report, published by the Ministry of Justice, [“Assessing Risk of Harm to Children and Parents in Private Law Children Cases”](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/895173/assessing-risk-harm-children-parents-pl-childrens-cases-report_.pdf) evidences the abuse and harmful impacts that often arise from family court orders, including long term damage to family relationships.

*“Enabling continued control of children and adult victims of domestic abuse by alleged abusers, as well as the continued abuse of victims and children, and long-term impacts of this abuse manifesting in physical, emotional, psychological, financial and educational harm and harm to children’s current and future relationships.”*

MoJ, June 2020

Like too many other women experiencing domestic violence and abuse, instead of protecting them, the state colluded with Victoria’s abuser in the most punishing way possible by severing mother and child and awarding custody to the perpetrator. Many other children in domestic abuse cases are severed from their mothers by adoption; the mother being blamed for the abuse rather than protected, and their right to family life permanently erased by adoption. Victoria and others continue to campaign for more transparency in family court proceedings.

For Victoria and other mothers in her position, it is ironic that the Joint Committee on Human Rights, is conducting an inquiry into hundreds of forced adoptions that severed babies from unmarried mothers during the 1950s to 1970s, when mothers experiencing domestic abuse are currently facing similar infringements of human rights in the family courts.

I hope that in your role as Chair, you can influence The Joint Committee on Human Rights to consider an inquiry into whether current family court decisions are breaching rights to family life by severing children from their mothers and irrevocably damaging family relationships.

Victoria Hudson lives in Aspatria, Cumbria and can be contacted via victoria\_hudson@hotmail.com

Yours sincerely

[name here, and title/ role]

1. Article 8: Respect for your private and family life “You have the right to enjoy family relationships without interference from government. This includes the right to live with your family and, where this is not possible, the right to regular contact.” <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights-act/article-8-respect-your-private-and-family-life> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)