Ministry of Justice

The Right Honourable
**Alex Chalk KC MP**
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of State for Justice

Rt Hon David T C Davies MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

**MP ref:** DD4103
**MoJ ref:** MC114526

21 May 2024

Dear David,

**TRANSCRIPT REQUEST**

Thank you for your email of 29 April on behalf of your constituent, Keith Hinchcliffe [redacted] about access to Crown Court transcripts.

I am sorry to read about the circumstances of this case. I realise Mr Hinchcliffe has been through a very traumatic time. Rape and serious sexual offences are devastating crimes that can have a lifelong impact on victims and survivors. I appreciate Mr Hinchcliffe would now like access to the transcripts of the trial but has been quoted a significant fee for this.

I realise the quotation provided to Mr Hinchcliffe for a transcript of the trial was several thousands of pounds and he would like the transcript without incurring this substantial fee. It is important to note that transcription companies are independent of HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) and HMCTS is not involved in the way they set their fees. I understand Mr Hinchcliffe made an application to the court and this was denied. I hope you will both understand this decision was made by a judge and I cannot intervene in this process because the judiciary are completely independent. I realise this will come as disappointing news to him. Mr Hinchcliffe can ask if the judge has written notes of the case and if he is willing to provide them at no cost. I hope Mr Hinchcliffe will understand this would also be a judicial decision and I am unable to ask the judge to make a favourable decision.

Very shortly we will be launching a one-year pilot of free sentencing remark transcripts to victims of sexual offences whose cases were sentenced at Crown Court. The pilot is eligible to any victim of a sexual offence that was sentenced at Crown Court, regardless of when the case was heard. This one-year pilot will run aside the current provision of free sentencing remarks to the families of homicide victims. HMCTS has also created a new online Gov.uk form to make it easier for both victims of sexual offences and the families of homicide victims, to apply for the transcripts.

The pilot offers the opportunity for victims to receive judges' sentencing remarks without cost. The pilot does not include whole trial transcripts. Sentencing remarks summarise the case made against the defendant and can provide victims with valuable insight into how the trial outcome and sentence was reached. The government has decided to pilot providing sentencing remarks only at this time, given the significant potential costs to the public purse of extending the remit to whole transcripts.

I am sorry to read of the impact the situation has had on Mr Hinchcliffe's mental health. If he would like, Mr Hinchcliffe can contact Victim Support to speak to someone about his experience and the impact this is still having on him. Victim Support can provide free, confidential advice and support to those affected by crime. More information is available on their website, **www.victimsupport.org.uk**, or they can be contacted on 0808 1689 111, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Information on other support available is available at **www.gov.uk/get-support-as-a-victim-of-crime**.

Thank you again for getting in touch. Whilst I appreciate my reply might not be what he had hoped for, I hope it confirms why I am unable to comment in the way Mr Hinchcliffe would like.

Yours sincerely,



**RT HON ALEX CHALK KC MP**

**LORD CHANCELLOR AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR JUSTICE**

**T** 020 3334 3555
**F** 0870 761 7753

**E** https://contact-moj.service.justice.gov.uk/
www.gov.uk/moj

102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ