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21 June 2016

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Legislative Council Secretariat Legislative Council Complex

1 Legislative Council Road

Central Hong Kong

Attn: Ms. Mary So, Clerk to Panel

Dear / More

Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services Meeting on 27 June 2016

We refer to Item II on the agenda of the AJLS Panel meeting scheduled on 27 June 2016, which is on measures for handling sexual offences cases and provision of screens for complainants in sexual offence case during court proceedings.

The Law Society in principle is in support of the use of screens for complainants in sexual offence cases during court proceedings. Among other things, we are pleased to see the amendments to and the issuance of the relevant Practice Directions (PDs 9.3, 9.4 and 9.10) on this matter.

Having said the above, we note some recent discussions on the arrangement of special channels for access by the complainants in sexual offence case to and from the court rooms for court proceedings. We fully appreciate the difficulties and the embarrassments the complainants in sexual offence cases could face, when they are to enter or leave the court buildings. We however note that in some cases, due to the physical structure of the Court buildings, special channels may not be available or accessible. The impossibility of and/or the difficulty in setting up the arrangement for complainants in the above situations should be appreciated.

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The Law Society of Hong Kong

After all, any arrangement on access to the court rooms for complainants in our views should not cause unreasonable public inconvenience. A balance should be struck.

Please kindly bring this letter to the attention of the Chairman of the Panel.

Kenneth Fok

Regards,

Director of Practitioners Affairs The Law Society of Hong Kong