



glasgow bar association  
established 1959

Room 1.29  
Glasgow Sheriff Court  
1 Carlton Place,  
Glasgow  
G5 9DA

14<sup>th</sup> January 2021

By Email only

Iain.Livingstone@scotland.pnn.police.uk

Dear Chief Constable Livingstone,

### **Police Station Interview Rooms - Risk Assessments**

We represent 365 members principally based across the west of Scotland, but with members nationwide, many of whom undertake criminal defence work. As you are aware, part of our members' duties include attending at police interviews across the country.

Concerns have been raised in relation to safety at police interviews in light of the ongoing pandemic, specifically that government advice regarding social distancing is not being followed within interview rooms. Many rooms are too small to allow for attendance of two police officers, one accused and one solicitor and this is leaving aside the potential for further persons being present e.g. interpreters or appropriate adults. Additionally, and possibly as a result of sound-proofing, most interview rooms are warm, humid and appear to lack appropriate ventilation. We have anecdotal information of interviews being accommodated in a police station reception area and a staff muster room within police stations and of one member contracting Covid 19 after attending a police station. The current mutation of the virus into the more easily transmittable version has prompted us to address matters formally.

We seek your assurance that all governmental advice is being followed in all stations where interviews are being conducted. The Law Society of Scotland's standing advice to members is that personal safety is to be their primary concern when attending court. **In light of the ongoing concerns with regard to safety within police interview rooms our advice to our members is that if they are not be satisfied that safety measures are being observed, they should not participate in police interviews.** Clearly such a position could have an effect on the admissibility of any evidence obtained from an interview thereafter conducted without the nominated solicitor present.

To reassure our members, we now seek disclosure of the health and safety risk assessments which have undoubtedly been undertaken in relation to the interview rooms for all police stations across Scotland. We appreciate that such a request may be dealt

with under Freedom of Information legislation but given the urgency of the situation we ask that these be provided by return.

We thank you in advance for your assistance and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

The Executive Committee of the Glasgow Bar Association