

Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ

21 April 2021

DEAR LORD CHANCELLOR

As groups concerned with access to justice and the rule of law, we are writing to request that the Ministry of Justice extends the deadline for its consultation on reform of judicial review.

The consultation was launched on Thursday 18th March and is due to close on Thursday 29th April. As you will know this six-week period includes the Easter school holidays, significantly limiting the time that people with childcare responsibilities will have to respond to the consultation.

You will also know that the consultation and the Government's proposed reforms raise complex and technical questions about the operation of administrative law. They include proposals which go beyond the scope of the IRAL and which require careful analysis. As the Institute for Government warned last week, these proposals come with 'obvious constitutional risks' and are likely to reduce 'the ability of citizens to challenge the exercise of coercive state power'. It is in the interest of all who are affected by judicial review, including the Government, that these proposals receive detailed scrutiny from lawyers, academics, citizens, and expert organisations. A six-week consultation period is simply not adequate to achieve this.

We note that Bindmans LLP has written to the department on this issue. We agree that extending the deadline for responses to the 10th June at the earliest would allow for meaningful engagement with the consultation.

In your foreword to the consultation you write that 'bringing in views from all sides of the debate is essential in making sure our reforms are the right ones'. We believe that taking this step is a necessary part of putting that commitment into action.

Gracie Bradley
Liberty

Paola Uccellari & Libby McVeigh
The Law Society

Andrea Coomber
JUSTICE

Ali Harris
Equally Ours

Jo Hickman
Public Law Project

Derek Sweeting QC
The Bar Council

Kate Allen
Amnesty International UK

The Centre for Women's Justice

Chai Patel
Joint Council for the Welfare of
Immigrants

Andrew Copson
Humanists UK

Cori Crider
Foxglove