Dear Dame Vera Baird

**Restoring confidence in the CCRC**

I am writing to you as the Chief Executive of Unlock, the national charity for people with criminal records. We support and advocate for the approximately 12.4 million people in the UK who live with what we refer to as ‘the long shadow of the criminal record’.

Our deepest concern in relation to the CCRC is that people who have been subject to a miscarriage of justice must have full confidence in the CCRC’s ability to review cases robustly and in a timely fashion.

Recent events have damaged this confidence

To be an effective instrument of justice, people who believe that they have been subject to a miscarriage of justice – some of whom we advocate for – must be able to trust the CCRC.

I am writing to suggest that involving people with lived experience of the justice system in refreshing the work of the CCRC could help to build this trust. Two options are: to employ people with lived experience in your teams, or to develop a lived experience advisory board alongside a reaffirmation of commitment via *Inside Times*, the prison newspaper.

HMPPS has made good progress in employing people with lived experience in policy teams. I am also aware of similar work in this area at the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman’s Office.

The CCRC’s future direction must be rooted in representation, the restoration of trust, and the pursuit of justice. Placing lived experience at the heart of this vision will help achieve that. I urge you to consider the suggestions I’ve made, on behalf of our members, to embed this approach in the Commission’s work.

If there is anything Unlock might be able to assist with, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Paula Harriott

CEO of Unlock