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Police Division 1
Scottish Executive Justice Department
Area 1W
St. Andrew's House
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Public Consultation: Blood testing following criminal incidents where there is a risk of infection.

I am writing to you both as an individual and the wife of a serving Police Officer who has had first hand experience in dealing with the aftermath of traumatic incidents where a partner has been exposed to potential infection.

Some years ago my husband worked in an area which contained a large number of intravenous drug users. In the incident I refer to, he had occasion to arrest a number of individuals.

One of the individuals involved became extremely violent and spat saliva into my husband's mouth, which caused a reflex action where my husband closed his mouth and swallowed the saliva. However, this was not the end of the matter. Whilst the individual and the others were being transported to the police station the individual concerned attempted to kick in the partition separating him from my husband and his colleague. His aggression was such that my husband had to obtain assistance at the police office to remove this individual.

On arrival at the office the man then head butted my husband's colleague causing injury to the other police officer and also a cut to the eye of the man they had arrested.

The man's violence continued and during the ensuing struggle the male threw his head from side to side causing the blood to spray which struck my husband in the face and mouth. The male indicated that he was a drug abuser and hoped that my husband would in his words "die".

My husband had to be taken to hospital where he was given a number of injections to combat any risk of infection. He was also strongly advised to attend at an HIV clinic and submit to an HIV test. He was informed that he had to inform me in case any infection was passed on. He was also informed to be careful around our children.

At the time, I was in the early stages of pregnancy, and when my husband returned home that evening and informed me what had happened to him and the potential consequences, I found it to be a crushing blow. I was extremely angry that this individual had not only done this to my husband who was only doing his job, but also that there was no mechanism to make him submit to a blood test to alleviate our concern.

As a result of this I became extremely anxious, and upset. Our family life was turned upside down and I was becoming increasingly concerned due to the stress this was putting on all of us as we waited for the next round of tests to be taken. The whole episode and the stress involved led me to suffer a miscarriage and we lost the child that I had been carrying. As you can imagine, this was devastating for all concerned.

What I want to do is to inform you how one incident has vast repercussions for not only the individual affected but also the potential consequences for the loved one's who surround them. In my husband's case if the individual was made to submit to a compulsory test a lot of the stress involved in our particular situation would have been avoided and the resultant devastating consequences on our family may not have happened.

That individual set out that evening to inflict as much pain as he possibly could. It was a deliberate act on his behalf. He chose to behave in the way that he did and in my opinion, at that moment, he gave up **any right** to refuse a blood test.

What the executive seeks to do in this consultation makes sense. It offers protection to the potential suspect and **more importantly** it offers protection to those individuals who are expected to deal with those that seek to cause us harm. I wholeheartedly support the proposed legislation.