

Justice for those accused by McKie

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YOUR editorial of November 10 urging the Scottish Executive to settle the McKie case emphasises the need for Ms McKie to have justice. But what about justice for those she accuses of acting maliciously? Her present case rests on her being able to prove that the four fingerprint experts deliberately misidentified her print in order to cause her harm. They did not. They made an identification in good faith which they stand by and which is supported by other experts outwith the Scottish Criminal Records Office. The simple fact of this case is that there is a disagreement over the identification. This is unusual but not unprecedented.

For the executive to settle on the basis of malice, without going to a hearing, is an abuse of the public purse and leaves the careers of four diligent and experienced public servants in ruins. They, too, have suffered, but scant regard has been paid to them by the employer and the executive. Ms McKie talks a lot about truth and justice. I do not doubt her sincerity. Unfortunately, truth and justice will not be served by paying Ms McKie a large amount of public money based on an unproven claim in order to simply make the matter go away.

She raises very serious questions about the quality of Scotland's criminal justice system. The public debate goes well beyond the distress experienced by her and it is the McKie family and their supporters who have questioned the integrity of such a broad range of institutions and individuals. The Scottish public deserve answers to those questions. Our members look forward to giving their answers to those questions with honesty under oath. The McKies' apparent desperation for a pre-trial settlement begs the question whether they are willing to do the same.

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