

# Proposed Whole Life Custody (Scotland) Bill

## Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to give Scottish courts the power to sentence the worst criminals to custody for the rest of their lives. The consultation runs from 29 May 2019 to 30 August 2019. All those wishing to respond to the consultation are strongly encouraged to enter their responses electronically through this survey. This makes collation of responses much simpler and quicker. However, the option also exists of sending in a separate response (in hard copy or by other electronic means such as e-mail), and details of how to do so are included in the member's consultation document. Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) require an answer. All responses must include a name and contact details. Names will only be published if you give us permission, and contact details are never published – but we may use them to contact you if there is a query about your response. If you do not include a name and/or contact details, we may have to disregard your response. Please note that you must complete the survey in order for your response to be accepted. If you don't wish to complete the survey in a single session, you can choose "Save and Continue later" at any point. Whilst you have the option to skip particular questions, you must continue to the end of the survey and press "Submit" to have your response fully recorded. Please ensure you have read the consultation document before responding to any of the questions that follow. In particular, you should read the information contained in the document about how your response will be handled. The consultation document is available here: [Consultation document](#) [Privacy Notice](#)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice attached to this consultation which explains how my personal data will be used

## About you

Please choose whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. Note: If you choose "individual" and consent to have the response published, it will appear under your own name. If you choose "on behalf of an organisation" and consent to have the response published, it will be published under the organisation's name.

an individual

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

Member of the public

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

*No Response*

Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation

Please provide your name or the name of your organisation. (Note: the name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or "not for publication". Otherwise this is the name that will be published with your response).

Helen Blackburn

Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number. We will not publish these details.

## Aim and approach

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of giving Scottish courts the power to sentence the worst criminals to custody for the rest of their lives?

Partially supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

I think it is important to look at the person's criminal record and the timeline of convictions before a decision is made. Certainly most murderers and rapists should remain in prison.

Q2. How would introducing Whole Life Custody Sentences affect your level of confidence in the Scottish justice system?

Slightly more confident in the justice system

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

It would show that the justice system is taking crime seriously and genuinely wants to protect the public. Hopefully a level of consistency would put off would-be criminals.

Q3. Which types of murder should have a Whole Life Custody Sentence as the starting point for sentencing? (Choose all that apply)

The murder of two or more persons, where each murder involves any of (1) a substantial degree of premeditation or planning, (2) the abduction of the victim, or (3) sexual or sadistic conduct

The murder of a child if involving the abduction of the child or sexual or sadistic motivation

A murder by an offender previously convicted of murder

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

If you are going to say Whole Life Custody for the murder of a police or prison officer in the course of their duty, what about other professions? Teachers and nurses have been killed while going about their normal work. Are their lives any less valuable than those of police or prison officers?

Q4. Which sexual offences should have a Whole Life Custody Sentence as the starting point for sentencing? (Choose all that apply)

Rape of two or more persons

Rape of a young child

Sexual assault on a young child by penetration

Causing a young child to participate in a sexual activity

**Please explain the reasons for this response.**

Any type of paedophilia is an illness and the perpetrator should be kept in a secure environment with no access to children for a whole life term but not necessarily in a prison. Rape should always carry a Whole Life Custody sentence.

Q5. Are there any other types of offence (other than murder or certain sexual offences) which should attract a Whole Life Custody Sentence as a 'starting point' for sentencing?

No- only murder and certain sexual offences should attract a Whole Life Custody Sentence

**Please explain the reason for your response.**

It may be possible to work with other criminals during a lengthy prison sentence to help reduce reoffending. However, it should be made clear to all criminals that further crimes may result in a Whole Life Custody Sentence.

Q6. Which of the following best expresses your view on whether whole life custody should be a sentencing option for younger offenders?

Whole life custody should be limited to offenders aged 16 or over (at the time the offence was committed)

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

Children under 16 who commit rape or murder should receive a minimum 25 year sentence.

## Financial Implications

Q7. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have? Please explain the reasons for your response.

I don't really think a financial impact should come into the discussions. Keeping people safe and keeping criminals off the streets should be the main priority.

## Equalities

Q8. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on equality, taking account of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender re-assignment, maternity and pregnancy, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation?

Neutral (neither positive nor negative)

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

It shouldn't matter what your protected characteristics are. If you commit a crime which allows for a Whole Life Custody Sentence then you should receive that sentence.

## Sustainability

Q9. Do you consider that the proposed Bill can be delivered sustainably, i.e. without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impacts?

Yes

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

If criminals are kept off the streets and the general public is safer then there shouldn't be any disproportionate impacts.

## General

Q10. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal?

Longer and stricter sentences for all offenders should be put in place. No pool tables, Playstations, entertainment etc. It's meant to be a punishment.