

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).

Stuart Macpherson

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?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Sentences should be kept simple and understandable. Life should mean life. If you only want to serve a shorter term, sentence them to a shorter term.

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

Significantly more confident in the justice system

Please explain the reasons for your response

Criminals will be seen to serve the full sentence they have been given.

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

The murder of a police or prison officer in the course of their duty

A murder carried out for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause

A murder by an offender previously convicted of murder

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

Please explain the reasons for your response

One victims life should not be less worthy than anothers.

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

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.

Offences against children should carry the more severe 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.

Whole life has to be restricted to the most extreme offences.

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 an option for any adult offender (aged 16 or over) or for children over the age of criminal responsibility (at the time the offence was committed)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

If you're above the age of criminal responsibility then full sentences are fair

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'd expect costs to rise. But what price justice?

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.

I don't see any change unless lesser sentences are already being applied to certain groups.

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

General

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

No Response