

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).

John Alistair

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.

Judges should have the option of imposing whole life sentences for certain offences. However, the convicted should have ongoing monitoring and the option to be released at some point. Unless a determination is made that they continue to pose a serious risk to the public, no one should be locked up indefinitely. Prison is there to protect the public, not sate it's appetite for punishing people.

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

Neither more nor less confident in the justice system

Please explain the reasons for your response

It's a relatively minor change

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

None of the above

Please explain the reasons for your response

No crime should have a whole life sentence as the starting point. Sentencing should be determined by the judge with appropriate reports and expert input, not politicians with a shallow agenda.

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

None of the above

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

Please explain the reasons for this response.

See answer to previous

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

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 21 or over (at the time the offence was committed)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Sentencing teenagers to life in prison is, quite frankly, sick. There already exist options for keeping dangerous people of any age locked up.

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.

Anything which seeks to increase the number of prisoners or their sentences is counterproductive, both socially and financially.

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.

Don't see how it comes into it

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?

No

Please explain the reasons for your response.

As we've seen with whole life tariffs in England, the problems outweigh any perceived gain in public support.

General

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

No