

Proposed Witchcraft Convictions (Pardons) (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to pardon all those convicted under the Witchcraft Act 1563.

The consultation runs from 23 June 2022 to 15 September 2022

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 which explains how my personal data will be used.

On the previous page we asked you if you are UNDER 12 YEARS old, and you responded Yes to this question.

If this is the case, we will have to contact your parent or guardian for consent.

If you are under 12 years of age, please put your contact details into the textbox. This can be your email address or phone number. We will then contact you and your parents to receive consent.

Otherwise please confirm that you are or are not under 12 years old.

No Response

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".)

Academic with expertise in a relevant subject

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what expertise or experience you have that is relevant to the subject-matter of the consultation.

I have been researching, teaching, writing and publishing in the area of violence against women, and gender and the law in the UK and internationally throughout my academic and professional career. The matter of witchcraft accusation and persecution has figured tangentially in my work and I have written in the most recent past two publications on witchcraft accusation in the UK and internationally through the lens of criminal and family law. I have also worked for a short period with the NGO WHRIN and visited Nepal in 2013 on behalf of WHRIN and the England and Wales Bar BHRC and contributed to a report on Witchcraft Accusation in Nepal.

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 Full Name or the name of your organisation. (Only give the name of your organisation if you are submitting a response on its behalf).

(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).

Professor Susan Sheila Maria Edwards

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 - Note: All answers to the questions in this section may be published (unless your response is "not for publication").

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill? (Please note that this question is compulsory.)

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

A similar Bill should be considered in England. The gynocide and persecution of so many women for nothing other than other peoples and the states and the monarchies suspicions needs to be recognised, acknowledged and women so treated recompensed. Witchcraft accusation and violence and torture in its name continues in many other countries in the world. It is significant that women trafficked into the UK in some cases and from some countries were trapped because of fear of traffickers and juju curses which were put upon them. We need to understand more about such accusations and conduct in the modern era and recognising that the countries that call themselves 'civilised' today had a major part in the brutal killing of women. The stripping and shaving of the body hair of women in medieval times following the Papal Bull and the publication of Malleus Maleficarum purportedly to look for so called signs of the devil in spots or blemishes was of course nothing more than pornography and sexual abuse. It is important to acknowledge these brutalities of misogyny in our past.

Q2. Do you think legislation is required, or are there other ways in which the proposed Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively? Please explain the reasons for your response.

Yes to legislation by which there is accountability and assessment of what has been done and a reporting back mechanism

Financial Implications

Q3. Any new law can have a financial impact which would affect individuals, businesses, the public sector, or others. What financial impact do you think this proposal could have if it became law?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Changing the discourse acknowledging the past would require education and syllabuses that considered history giving voice to what happened to women. There would be some cost by local councils for hosting events and printing literature. It may be that a monument to the murdered woman is placed outside a library or rail station in Glasgow or in Edinburgh. There is for example a monument outside the Manchester Piccadilly station recognising men who fought in the war. So there would be some costs it would be for the public sector to bear this cost.

Equalities

Q4. 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, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation?

Positive

Please explain the reasons for your response including the impact on people with particular protected characteristics

Q4. 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, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation?

It is self evident that the women who were persecuted were persecuted because they were women. Men who were persecuted were persecuted because of their association or defence of these women. What clear example can one have of systematic brutal discrimination on the ground of sex. Surely this illustrates exactly what can happen and indeed is happening elsewhere in the world to women because of their sex nothing more. And it serves as a reminder of where discrimination and misogynistic myth can lead us as it did in 1500-1600's.

Sustainability

Q5. Any new law can impact on work to protect and enhance the environment, achieve a sustainable economy, and create a strong, healthy, and just society for future generations.

Do you think the proposal could impact in any of these areas? (If you do not have a view then skip to next question)

Please explain the reasons for your answer, including what you think the impact of the proposal could be, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts?

The creation of a just society for future generations is self evident. We must learn from the errors of the past in order to ensure that sex does not become a reasons to discriminate. This can be used too as a means to demonstrate what can happen when any characteristic is discriminated against targetted etc. I cant see what negative impact it could have of course there will always be those who will think its irrelevant but the connections are transparent to many.

General

Q6. Do you have any other additional comments or suggestions on the proposed Bill (which have not already been covered in any of your responses to earlier questions)?

No I am happy to share my writings on this subject with you if you so request.