

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".)

Professional with experience 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.

Lawyer

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).

Sharon Collins

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

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

Please explain the reasons for your response.

I've had an active interest Scotland's Witch Trials since I was 14 years old. The history of these trials are local to almost every part of Scotland and actively encouraged by King James VI of Scotland. The owner of Glasgow's Pollok House was a witch finder and a very active one at that. The Kirk and Church of Scotland was also actively involved in these barbaric accusations and tortured confessions based on conjecture, superstition and misogyny by the powerful gentry, the Church of Scotland and indeed the King himself. Those accused stood no chance against the power of the rich, the king and the Church. Over 80% of those accused and convicted were women. Indeed King James book on Demonology stated openly that women were more susceptible to the devil, with his justification found in the sins of Eve tempting Adam... oh poor hapless Adam...!! It had to be the women folk at the core of original sin. But there lay the core of misogyny which sadly in its modern form in crimes against women is still present. A hate crime rightly recognises an aggravation in the weight of sentencing when racism is present, equally when homophobia is present... so why then has misogyny not been recognised in law as the hate crime it is and treated as an aggravation? I've been asked why is it important to give a pardon to women treated so wrongfully centuries ago... my answer is this... because women hating it's still not recognised in the law and the treatment of women throughout history demonstrates horrific examples of that hatred which hasn't been recognised for centuries. One might argue that it's historic, but one might also argue so was slavery... but sadly such assumptions would be inaccurate as it's still occurring today. This pardon, apology and movement to have monuments to recognise wrong doings against women kind is very significant as a reminder that we must be aware of women hating and treat it as the crime it is.

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.

Misogyny is a hate crime. It's never been recognised in law. The Witch Trial campaign is bringing this hate crime into stark focus. Those who dismiss this campaign as "why bother now, it's historic" are missing the point. Would they say this about slavery? I'd hope not, so why should the wrong doings of history not be recognised by monument and the awareness of hate crimes brought into modern consciousness to stamp it out from happening in their modern forms.

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

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

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?

Misogyny recognised as a hate crime is long overdue in the work place, in criminal law, Policing and within the Justice System. To have this enshrined in law gives women for the first time in history a protection they have needed for centuries. The unhealthy views about women are still present. Websites such as INCEL which actively exchange and sometimes plot hate crimes against women is a frightening and stark example that women hating is not confined to the history bin. Whilst this is a stark example there are by far more covert ways of women hating which need case law to develop to give a legal voice to the many ways misogyny finds it way into severely effecting women's lives.

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 Response