

# 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".)

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 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).

Eóin Killackey

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.**

These people were convicted for something which we now know could not have been true. A pardon for them sends a powerful message about the maturity of a state to accept and own that it made mistakes in the past, and also, more importantly, it means that these women (mostly) and men are pardoned of these

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

crimes with which they never should have been charged. It also sends a message to those parts of the world where witchcraft is still used mainly against old women and young girls, that this is not acceptable.

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.

I believe that because it would not be feasible to trace descendants of those so accused, that a legislated pardon is required. While technically it would pardon those accused, the most powerful aspect of such a legislated pardon would be the Scottish state confronting and rectifying its own errors.

## 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?

no overall change in costs

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

I cannot see any legitimate claim against the state as a result of this pardon. There is no need to establish a part of government to receive or process applications for pardon. This is a cost free, but important piece of legislation.

## 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**

I am a cis-gendered middle aged white man. It is important to state that at the outset. The accusation of witchcraft in Scotland historically, and in many jurisdictions presently is used to predominantly persecute women and girls. And it is a power predominantly exercised by men. Beyond witchcraft, women are disproportionately targeted. This weekend we only have to look at the furore around the Finnish PM enjoying a night with her friends to see what happens when a woman seeks to have a voice. Owning historical wrongs - in this case against (largely) women - is a way for states to draw attention to what still needs to be done. I only see this bill having a positive impact.

## 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?

I believe that this bill will lead to a more just environment in Scotland, and will be a beacon for greater justice for marginalised women and girls internationally.

## 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