

# Right to Food (Scotland) Bill

## Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to incorporate the right to food into Scots law.

The consultation runs from 25 November 2021 to 16 February 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

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

Half a century in public service, both in the public sector, and third-sector. Over a decade specialising in helping the most vulnerable members of our community.

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. (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).

Iain Gregory

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 proposal to incorporate the right to food into Scots law?

Fully supportive

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

The most basic human needs are for food and shelter. Far too many people have very restricted access to either. A society is measured by the way it treats its most vulnerable members. I have seen many people deprived of these essentials, and we must act to make sure nobody is hungry (or homeless).

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.

As a matter of fact, although I tend to prefer to achieve results by consent, I think this is a case where legislation is vital. I have seen people being "sanctioned" by the DWP, and at the same time being pursued for unpayable Council Tax debt, and we need to be able to say "No". Food, along with heat and shelter, is inviolate. In this case the "enemy" tends to be the system - and in such cases we need laws. It is the only way to ensure compliance.

Q3. Which of the following best expresses your view on an independent statutory body being given responsibility for overseeing and reporting on progress towards realising the right to food?

Fully supportive

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

Complete independence is vital. Statutory authority is essential. The body needs to have an eclectic composition - including people who know what it is like to be hungry.

Q4. Should an independent body be given responsibility for overseeing and reporting on the right to food, do you think it should be:

A newly created body

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

Newly created. A fresh sheet of paper, no possible conflicts of interest, and entirely apolitical.

Q5. Which of the following best expresses your view of enshrining a right to food into Scots law as a priority in advance of, and in a manner which is compatible with, any further Scottish Government legislation on wider human rights?

Fully supportive

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

From my house, I can see the Victorian "Poorhouse" at Halkirk. 150 years ago we did not allow people to be without basic food and shelter. Yes, the conditions, and stigma, were poor, but there was food, and there was shelter. We haven't really come on much since then, have we?

Q6. Which of the following best expresses your view of placing responsibility for guaranteeing the right to food on the Scottish Government?

Fully supportive

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

The most vital task of any Government is to protect it's people. Food is the most basic need of all. It is the duty of Government to ensure nobody goes without food. I think that enshrining this in law will concentrate minds.

## Covid-19 Pandemic

Q7. What impact do you consider the effects of, and response to, the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the need for a right to food to be incorporated into Scots law?

Increased the need for the Bill

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

Only when the inevitable inquiries start to be held after life returns to normal will the full extent of human suffering start to become evident, but if you shut a whole country down - and keep doing it - the poorest will always suffer the most. Many have been tired, cold, hungry, and mentally ill as a result of the draconian responses to Covid-19. If someone is already on the breadline, and virtually the entire economy closes down, the people who lose out will always be the most vulnerable.

## Financial Implications

Q8. Taking into account all those likely to be affected (including public sector bodies, businesses and individuals etc), is the proposed Bill likely to lead to:

some increase in costs

**Please indicate where you would expect the impact identified to fall (including public sector bodies, businesses and individuals etc). You may also wish to suggest ways in which the aims of the Bill could be delivered more cost-effectively.**

At the moment, virtually all "food relief" is delivered by organisations such as the Trussell Trust. A contract will be needed between Scotgov and such third-sector organisations, to ensure delivery. A small increase in costs may be occasioned - but no better way of spending.

## Equalities

Q9. 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?

Neutral (neither positive nor negative)

Q9. 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?

**Please explain the reasons for your response. Where any negative impacts are identified, you may also wish to suggest ways in which these could be minimised or avoided.**

There is only one measure here - Is a person in need of food? If the answer is "Yes" then fix it.

## Sustainability

Q10. In terms of assessing the proposed Bill's potential impact on sustainable development, you may wish to consider how it relates to the following principles:

- living within environmental limits
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- achieving a sustainable economy
- promoting effective, participative systems of governance
- ensuring policy is developed on the basis of strong scientific evidence.

With these principles in mind, do you consider that the Bill can be delivered sustainably?

Yes

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

I can conceive of no reason why not.....

## General

Q11. 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)?

I have dealt with too many people in tears because they had no food, no money, and precisely nil sympathy from the various government agencies. Make it law, and make it incontrovertible.