

# 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".)

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:**

I am a social worker and children's rights officer

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).

Kate Ramsden

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

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposal to incorporate the right to food into Scots law?

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

We are a rich country and there is no excuse for anyone or any child to live in poverty, never mind to have inadequate access to food. The rise of food banks has unfortunately shown how necessary this is but people should not have to rely on charity to have enough to eat. The proposal for a holistic approach is welcomed because the lack of income is caused by many different factors including low wages, insecure work, inadequate benefits and no recourse to public funds by asylum seekers and refugees. There is also the whole issue of access to food for many of our older and disabled citizens. A legal right to food should not be necessary in our rich country but in my view is shamefully absolutely essential to ensure that everyone in Scotland can get enough to eat.

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 think this requires legislation which must provide a framework for tackling all the issues that result in people having food insecurity. The Scottish government may mean well but child poverty has continued to grow in Scotland. If a lack of access to food is to be addressed then it needs changes in the law which requires the Scottish Government to put its money where its mouth is. Legislation provides a clear statement of intent about the kind of society we aim to be. It also allows for the government to be held accountable for delivering on it or open to challenge. Legislation also places requirements on others to do their bit and should provide a framework for joined up working.

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.**

I think that an overview is essential if the government is to be held to account. The independence and of such a body will be essential with a lot of thought given to who will be part of it and a need to ensure that its focus is welfare based and is not market driven.

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

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.**

The situation for many of our citizens is dire and made worse by Covid. Access to food is a human right and the levels of hunger in our so-called civilised society are unacceptable and need to be addressed as a priority.

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 government must take responsibility for the welfare of its citizens and it can compel other parties to work together to address all the underlying reasons for food insecurity and inaccessibility.

## 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.**

Covid has both increased the numbers of people dependent on food banks as a result of food insecurity and has also exposed the levels of hunger within Scotland. Combined with increasing costs of food and especially fuel, loss of employment and growing ill-health including mental ill health, this is a perfect storm and it needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

## 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:

a significant 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.**

I would think it is likely to lead to increased costs which will require some prioritisation but also consideration of using our taxation powers in a far more redistributive way.

## 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?

Positive

**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.**

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?

We know that food insecurity disproportionately affects the poorest in our society and particularly those with protected characteristics, such as women, children, older people and those with disabilities. Also many Black and minority ethnic workers, women and young people tend to be in low paid, insecure work. Other equalities groups are also disproportionately impacted. So creating a legal right to food would promote equality for these groups if they no longer had the additional challenge of food insecurity.

## 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 think it will cost money at first but if it means that people have more money in their pockets to spend in their local economies it will have a positive knock on effect on the economy. A right to access food and support for healthy eating will promote wellbeing and will reduce dependence on health and social services. In my view, investment at the beginning will reap many benefits both in terms of people's lives and for the economy.

## 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)?

The no recourse to public funds policy has been horrific for refugees and asylum seekers. A legal right to food would need to apply to asylum seekers and refugees as to every other citizen living in Scotland and would but up against some of the national immigration legislation which is so hostile and disrespectful of asylum seekers and refugees. This will need some consideration but I hope the Scottish Government would stick to its well established principle that its rights and welfare legislation applies to everyone living in Scotland.