

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.

on behalf of an organisation

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".)

No Response

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

Third sector (charitable, campaigning, social enterprise, voluntary, non-profit)

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what the organisation does, its experience and expertise in the subject-matter of the consultation, and how the view expressed in the response was arrived at (e.g. whether it is the view of particular office-holders or has been approved by the membership as a whole).

The organisation, Abundant Borders, works towards a world where everyone, regardless of personal circumstances, has access to healthy, nutritious food. Our mission is to alleviate food insecurity in the Scottish Borders by creating a network of local food production and encouraging people to seek out locally produced food.

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).

Karen Birch on behalf of Abundant Borders

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.

We believe that food should be accessible, adequate, available and affordable and that the best way to assure this is by incorporating the Right To Food in Scots Law. We believe that the government also has a duty to make sure that the people producing the food have safe working conditions and receive a fair wage, and that food is produced in a way that respects animals and the environment.

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.

Legislation is required to ensure that this, and future governments, deliver the right to food. Legislation will also ensure that this, and future governments, can be held to account if they fail to deliver.

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.

Our food system is complicated and different issues are connected across it. Issues like food insecurity, climate change, public health, animal welfare, biodiversity, food waste, and the rights of workers growing, preparing and serving our food. Currently every part of the system operates independently, with different goals and priorities. This means it is difficult to manage the whole system and to ensure that everyone gets a fair deal when it comes to food. An independent statutory body can assure that a whole systems approach is introduced and maintained. The body needs to be independent to ensure that this, and future governments, are held to account and fulfil their obligations in respect of the right to food.

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.

The challenges facing the food system have not yet been adequately addressed by any existing body and we do not have confidence that adding additional responsibilities to current institutions will create an organisation able to take the whole systems approach that is necessary to properly deliver the right to food.

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 challenges in the food system are complex, long-standing and need to be addressed as a matter of

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?

urgency. While it is good to know that the current government have expressed a commitment to legislating to improve human rights overall, we can see no reason why the right to food cannot (also) be enshrined within the Good Food Nation Bill. This would ensure that, irrespective of the government at Holyrood, the right to food can be delivered speedily.

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 should have a responsibility to deliver the right to food for everyone in Scotland. Currently this is not the case and charities have been filling the gaps when it comes to tackling food insecurity - leading to more reliance on food banks. The right to food places responsibility to address food insecurity, and the other failings within the food system, with the government. Putting the right to food into Scots Law ensures that this, and future governments, take responsibility to ensure that everyone has enough money to buy healthy, nutritious food and that matters of low wages and poor working conditions in the sector are addressed. It will also ensure that responsibility for environmental, human health and animal welfare issues lies with government.

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.

The pandemic has shed light on the inadequacies in the current system. The reliance of food banks for the most vulnerable in society increased as thousands lost their jobs, faced reduced hours and decreased job security through zero hours contracts. It has also exposed the shortcomings in global supply chains, highlighting our reliance on imports for foodstuffs, and the raw materials for our own food production such as fertilisers and animal feed. At the same time, rather than bolstering local supply chains, the focus has been on increasing production for exports, with more and more land dedicated to grain growing for alcohol production. The pandemic has also shown up health inequalities, with increases in obesity and diet related illnesses, such as obesity. Incorporating the right to food into Scots law will ensure that the government takes action to address food related ill health.

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:

don't know

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:

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.

This should not be about cost. It is about making sure that everyone has access to healthy nutritious food and is treated with dignity. In a civilised society, the costs and cost savings should be secondary to the basic right to food. While making sure, through the benefit system, that the most vulnerable have enough money to buy nutritious food may impact the social security bill the government pays, a reduction in costs to the NHS can be expected due to a reduction in diet related illnesses. While ensuring that workers in the food system receive a fair wage may increase costs to some businesses, there are likely to be benefits in improved employee wellbeing and reduction in the number of sick days taken. Incorporating the right to food is about long-term investment in the health and wellbeing of the Scottish people and all the components of the food system.

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.

Equality is at the heart of the right to food. Some people are vulnerable to unfair employment practices and low wages or rely on social security benefits which are inadequate to allow them to buy food to support a healthy lifestyle. Improving these issues will have a positive impact on vulnerable people that suffer the most from these inequalities

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.

The bill will have positive effect on sustainable development. Making farming and fishing less wasteful and less polluting will have a positive environmental impact. Improving wages and social security so that individuals and families can afford a healthy diet will have a positive social impact. And improving business employment practices will lead to a healthier workforce.

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)?

We would like the right to food brought into Scots law at the earliest opportunity. The Good Food Nation Bill, which is currently before parliament, should clearly state that its purpose is to deliver the right to food. We can see no reason why we should wait for the introduction of wider human rights legislation for the right to food to be established.