

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".)

Politician (MSP/MP/peer/MEP/Councillor)

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).

Carol Mochan MSP

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.

I am fully supportive of my colleague Rhoda Grant MSP's plans to incorporate the right to food into Scots Law.

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

Food insecurity and hunger should not exist in a modern society, but they remain prevalent in Scotland today and we must meet these significant challenges with bold, transformative policies.

It is my view that a right to food bill, which would place responsibility on the Scottish Government to ensure everyone has access to sufficient amounts of affordable nutritious food, can be that bold and transformative policy and it would alleviate pressure for so many who due to years of increased cost of living are struggling to put food on the table.

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 absolutely required. Governments change, priorities change, and concentration can be lost. Commitments only go so far, but legislation places a legal duty on legislators not only to act, but to track and scrutinise the progress of the legislation, with input from an independent statutory oversight body, and ensure it is working appropriately to deliver for those it initially sought to support.

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 am fully supportive of an independent statutory body being given responsibility for overseeing and reporting on progress towards realising the right to food. The food system is wide ranging in that the factors impacting it reach across several Ministerial portfolios and committee focuses, from climate change and food insecurity to public health.

Having an independent statutory body in place to oversee the progress of this bill and to report back will ensure that, if a Government is performing poorly on the matter, key issues are not being missed, and this will give MSPs and others strong basis to question the Government on their delivery of this legislation.

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.

This should be a newly created body. As a new piece of legislation, the right to food bill should be granted a newly created body with full focus on the implementation of the bill.

Adding the right to food to the remit of an existing body would be to not give the bill the prominence it deserves and in order to deliver proper research, scrutiny, and successful implementation, a newly created body is required.

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.

I am fully supportive. The challenges facing families across Scotland require urgent action now. The cost of living is constantly increasing, people are hungry, and current policy is not going far enough to lift the most vulnerable out of poverty.

A Human Rights Bill is welcome, however, we cannot allow the specific right to food to be overlooked, therefore enshrining into Scots Law as a priority is absolutely necessary if we are to tackle hunger and food insecurity as well as address the environmental issues surrounding food production.

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.

I am fully supportive. The issues a right to food bill would seek to tackle are issues that the Scottish Government is responsible for, hunger, food insecurity, low pay, food production, and protecting the environment.

It should be the responsibility of the Government to ensure food is produced in a more effective, sustainable way and equally it is the responsibility of Government to ensure everyone has a right to accessible, affordable, and nutritious food.

Charities, foodbanks, and other organisations have played a pivotal role so far in assisting those most in need, but a legal responsibility placed on Government will hopefully address the widespread issues we face and allow for a longer term approach to eradicate these issues entirely.

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.

I think the impact has been very significant. Indeed, I think the impact has been widespread from the difficulty experienced in supply chains, to the financial burden on the most vulnerable only being exacerbated due to the economic impact of the pandemic.

Indeed, we have found that obesity has been considered an 'underlying condition' impacting upon an individual's ability to fight back against Covid-19.

The pandemic has highlighted the vulnerability of our society and economy in many ways, and it has only confirmed further the requirement for a Right to Food to be enshrined in Scots Law to ensure there are legal protections in place across policy areas.

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:

no overall change 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.

In terms of cost it is clear that there would be investment needed to implement a right to food. This would come mainly in the form of funding and maintaining a statutory independent body, and indeed to ensure that there is adequate investment in the food system to ensure that the infrastructure is there to deliver on the aims of the bill.

Having said this, the health benefits, I would hope, of a right to food bill would also be significant and would lead to a reduction in the number of people who are considered to be obese.

Indeed, individuals and families who are unable to afford nutritious food will see their costs reduce with the Right to Food bill placing a responsibility on Government to ensure everyone is able to access adequate amounts of nutritious food.

Investment to make this bill work is worthwhile if a healthier nation is the result, and a healthier nation in return should lead to significant savings in the health and social care sector.

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.

I believe the impact would be positive. The purpose of enshrining the right to food in Scots Law is to benefit everyone in Scotland. Indeed, its main aim is to make our country more equal. It is clear that it may be of greater benefit to some in society than others from the perspective of food insecurity and hunger but that in itself highlights that the bill seeks to promote equality and make Scotland a better place to live for everyone.

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.

This bill can absolutely be delivered sustainably. Indeed, sustainability is at the core of the proposed bill. The bill seeks to make food production more sustainable, reducing waste and polluting less. It aims to improve wages, make food more accessible and affordable, and as such improve the welfare of the society which will have significant positive impact on the health and well being of the population. Indeed, its delivery would be overseen by an independent board of experts whose role will be to ensure the bill delivers on what it seeks to do, which is to create a more sustainable food system, deliver better wages, improve health and wellbeing and eradicate hunger and food insecurity from our society. Ultimately better access to healthy, locally sourced, sustainable food, will result in a sustainable food system and a healthier nation.

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 opportunity before us is significant and should not be missed. A right to food being enshrined in Scots Law would be a huge step towards tackling food insecurity and hunger, producing food more sustainably with focus on the environmental impact of food production being at the centre, and improving public health outcomes. A Right to Food would benefit our entire country, indeed for a range of reasons, and we must take the opportunity now to support it.