

Proposed Right to Food (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to incorporate the human right to food into Scots Law The consultation runs from 24 June to 15 September 2020. 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. 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 attached to this consultation which explains how my personal data will be used

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 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).

Janice Hamilton

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

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view on enshrining the human right to food into Scots law?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

People deserve the right to food and the right to be paid sufficiently to be able to afford healthy and nutritious food in the quantities they require. Enshrining the right to food in to Scots Law ensures that the government becomes obligated to make sure everyone is sufficiently fed.

Q2. Which of the following best describes your view on the creation of an independent statutory body with responsibility for the right to food?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response

An independent body would be best created to oversee that all were given the right to food - there would be no bias toward what was best for government only what was best in terms of food access to those that needed it .

Q3. What do you think would be the main practical advantages and disadvantages of the proposed Bill?

The advantages would be that the government would be placed in a position to ensure the right to food for everyone in Scotland, an independent body would be created to make the government accountable and give them a focus for their actions in this regard and it would give people the confidence that their right to food is assured. The disadvantages would be that the bill will only focus on the right to food and not to other aspects of food supply and acquisition.

Q4. Which of the following expresses your view of enshrining a right to food into Scots law as a priority in advance of any further Scottish Government legislation on wider human rights?

Fully supportive

Q4. Which of the following expresses your view of enshrining a right to food into Scots law as a priority in advance of any further Scottish Government legislation on wider human rights?

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Without the right to food to sustain life what other human rights would be relevant? It also has a knock on effect on other aspects of the food supply chain and that of the environment so is an urgently needed priority for these reasons also.

Q5. What advantages or disadvantages would there be to establishing a statutory body with responsibility for the right to food?

Advantages of establishing a statutory body are that a statutory body can review and report on the Government's actions as well as helping to ensure that the Government works across the whole food system recognising the links between, for example, food insecurity, low wages and poor health. It can also provide guidance and research to ensure the right to food is at the centre of Government decision making. A statutory body can help ensure the Government is held to account.

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The disadvantages of establishing a statutory body would be that there may not be impartiality.

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

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Placing responsibility with government allows the right to food to be delivered for everyone in Scotland. Charities have been filling the gaps left by Government when it comes to addressing the growing levels of food insecurity and this absolves the government to some extent of this responsibility. Workers in the food sector suffer high levels of job insecurity and poor wages, the way we produce food is harmful to animals and the environment and the right to food recognises that these problems are Government failures as it is their responsibility to ensure everyone has enough money to afford nutritious food, through fair wages or adequate benefits, and our food system promotes the wellbeing of people, animals and our environment.

Q7. What impact do you believe bringing the right to food into law would have on:

	Significant impact	Some impact	No impact
(a) Reducing food insecurity	X		
(b) Improving people's health	X		
(c) Workers in the food sector			

Please explain the reasons for your response

People will be free from the worry about where their next meal is coming from and having the human right to food enshrined in Scots Law will give people the dignity to make choices for themselves in other areas of their lives.

Ensuring the right to food will mean that people will be given the appropriate, nutritious food for their needs and will mean that they will eat better which will have a knock on effect of their mental and physical health. This improvement will mean less of a strain on our health service.

Financial Implications

Q8. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have on:

	Significant increase in cost	Some increase in cost	Broadly cost-neutral	Some reduction in cost	Significant reduction in cost	Unsure
(a) Government and the public sector			X			
(b) Businesses		X				
(c) Individuals				X		

Please explain the reasons for your response

- A) I'd imagine that the cost to government in providing the right to food would be offset in the long term by the reduction in the costs of the health service.
- B). The rise in cost of wages to ensure people could afford to provide healthy food for themselves might be offset by the fact that people would be being encouraged to support local food businesses.
- C) Feeling better about being able to provide healthy, affordable nutritious food can only be a good thing for individuals. And it depends how you define cost, here I presume it to mean financial cost but it could be that costs to health would be significantly reduced.

Q9. Are there ways in which the Bill could achieve its aim more cost-effectively (e.g. by reducing costs or increasing savings)?

There would be no cost higher to government and to the people of Scotland than if nothing were to be done. This definition of cost should not only be looked upon as financial cost.

Equalities

Q10. 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.

Looking at all aspects of people's right to food can only be beneficial to every one from every walk of life.

Q11. In what ways could any negative impact of the Bill on equality be minimised or avoided?

It is important to ensure that the independent statutory body includes representation from a diverse group of people. Scientists, farmers, food sector workers, charities and those forced to visit food banks must be involved as they would bring a range of experiences and knowledge needed to make a food system fit for everyone. It is important that this representation takes into account protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Promoting equality is at the heart of the right to food and so it must be key to any decisions about our food system.

Sustainability

Q12. Do you consider that the proposed Bill can be delivered sustainably, i.e. without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impacts?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Keeping a focus on food sustainability and keeping food miles to a minimum should have a positive effect. Encouraging people to eat well and buy locally produced, sustainable food - ensuring people are being paid a fair wage that will allow them to Eat this way can only have a positive affect on sustainability.

General

Q13. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal?

It is important that the right to food is put into Scots law. Our food system should be a Governmental priority as for too long it has been overlooked. There is a danger that this bill does not adequately focus on all aspects of the food system. Any proposals on the right to food are best put into law as part of a bill on the whole of the food system. These proposals on the right to food fit very well into the Good Food Nation Bill – a food bill that was due to be introduced in Spring 2020 but was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Good Food Nation Bill can change our food system by working across the whole food supply chain and looking after people and the planet. It should be based upon the right to food so that the Government knows what is important when it makes decisions on the food system.

The Good Food Nation Bill will work across the whole food system, from production to processing, distribution, selling, purchasing and consumption to ensure better outcomes for individuals, workers, the NHS, animals, and the environment.