

Proposed Removal from Office and Recall (Members of the Scottish Parliament) Bill

Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to introduce new measures on removing an MSP from office, including additional grounds for removal and new processes for removal, such as recall. Proposed new grounds for removal include where an MSP does not participate in parliamentary proceedings for a given period without valid reason or receives a prison sentence lower than the current threshold for automatic removal.

The consultation runs from 20 January 2022 to 13 April 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

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).

Richard Saunders

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 proposed Bill?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

We've witnessed various incidences where MSP's have either failed to live up to or indeed breached the expectations of the 'standards in public life. One example is former MSP Derek Mackay who [redacted] and failed to attend parliament sessions following the revelations about his conduct, while still receiving full

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill?

salary and expenses. Similarly, the first minister has been caught on more than one occasion overtly [Redacted] to either parliament itself, or a committee of the parliament.

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.

A statute is required. My reason for stating this is, the Sturgeon/Salmond debacle and subsequent committee of enquiry, has clearly demonstrated that there are those elected members who will [Redacted] citing 'selective memory' when presenting evidence at such inquiries. Such actions are more difficult to argue when being cross-examined by proper, legally trained lawyers / Sheriff's / judges, added to which, is the potential to charge a person with either contempt of court, or perjury.

Q3. What is your view on the proposal to remove MSPs from office if they do not participate sufficiently in parliamentary proceedings?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response. Please include your views on: what constitutes sufficient participation, how the process for removing an MSP from office should work in practice where they are not sufficiently active for a period of, for example, six months (see detail of consultation document under element one of the proposal for background on this question).
The 'contract' between MSP's and the general public -irrespective of what political hue they wear- is an implicit expectation to uphold the highest standards of integrity in their public life. Sadly, the past 15 or so years have seen these standards eroded dramatically

Q4. What is your view on the proposal that receiving a prison sentence of a year or less is an appropriate trigger for an MSP to be automatically removed from office?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response, including detailing how long you consider a minimum prison sentence should be to trigger the automatic removal.
ANY incarceration for ANY criminal offence and for ANY length of time, signifies that the person is prepared to breach the law and is therefore unworthy of holding significant public office

Q5. What is your view on the proposal that an individual who is removed as an MSP under these proposals, either through insufficient participation or being sentenced to a particular period in prison, should be unable to stand as an MSP again for the rest of the relevant parliamentary session?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.
I would suggest that in such circumstances, they are banned from holding public office ad-indefinitum. The reason for this answer is simple, if they are removed for (e.g.) the reasons quoted, they have demonstrated a complete lack of commitment to upholding the standards of their office

Q6. What is your view on the proposal to introduce a system of recall for MSPs? Recall is where the electorate in an area can trigger a special election to remove an elected representative before the end of their term if certain conditions are met

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response, including how you would envisage such a system working in practice, for members elected under the regional list system and for constituency members elected under the first past the post system.

I would refer to my previous example of the Derek Mackay debacle.

Q7. What is your view on the proposal that, where an MSP has been given a prison sentence, they should only be removed from office once any appeal process they pursue has concluded?

Partially supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response, including commenting on the alternative option where an MSP given a prison sentence would be removed from office as soon as they are sentenced, as opposed to awaiting the completion of an appeals process.

I partially support this on the assumption that an 'appeal' would be on the basis of the fundamentals of the case and NOT on legal technicalities. [Redacted]

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 reduction 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.

It would free up MSP's from convening / attending committees by passing the responsibility to the Crown Office

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.

It would provide the public with a degree of comfort that any 'rogue' MSP's stand to be recalled/dismissed

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.
Ensures governance arrangements are fit for purpose

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)?

No