Guidance for submitting evidence

**Why are we asking for this?**

Rape Crisis Scotland is a survivor led organisation. This means that we aim to make sure that all of our policies and positions are informed by the experiences and perspectives of survivors.

The Scottish Government’s Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform Bill proposes really significant changes to the way rape and sexual assault cases are dealt with in the justice system. We believe that most of the changes it proposes will benefit survivors.

This Bill could be the biggest change in how sexual offence cases are dealt with in Scotland for decades.

The Bill contains many proposals including

* [Creating specialist courts for sexual offences](https://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/news/blog/why-scotland-needs-specialist-sexual-offences-courts/)
* [Removing juries from sexual offence trials](https://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/news/blog/why-we-support-single-judge-trials/)
* [End the Not Proven verdict](https://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/campaigns-end-not-proven/)
* Introduce a legal right to anonymity in sexual offence cases

The Bill is not yet law. Before it becomes law, it must pass through several stages in Parliament. More information on these stages and what happens at each of them is available [on the Scottish Parliament website](https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/about-bills/how-a-bill-becomes-an-act).

The Bill is currently at Stage One. As part of Stage One, public bodies, charities and other organisations whose work is linked to the bill will have the opportunity to give written evidence about why they support or do not support the bill and include details of any amendments they think should be made to the bill.

Rape Crisis Scotland will be submitting written evidence about the impact the bill could have on the experience of survivors accessing the justice system. We want the experiences of survivors to be at the core of this evidence.

**What should you include?**

You do not have to include any personal information about yourself or your experience if you don’t want to. Please only include information and details that you are comfortable sharing and that you would be comfortable being included in Rape Crisis Scotland’s written submission of evidence.

In your evidence, please include information about why you think this bill is important. Our suggestions for what you might like to include are below

* What parts of the bill you think will make a positive difference to survivors
* The difference parts of the bill might have made to your own experience
* Why we need to see justice reform
* What parts of the bill you think should be changed and why

You don’t need to cover all of these areas, these are just suggestions to help guide you.

**What will you do with what I write?**

**Anything you include in your evidence submission form may be used in our written evidence to the Scottish Parliament. We will be putting our communications about our evidence on our website, to the press and on social media.**

Your evidence will help us say exactly why this bill is so important and why it matters to survivors in Scotland.

Your submission will be edited for length and anonymised. Due to limits on how much evidence we can submit, we unfortunately might not be able to use any of what you share with us.

It’s also important to note that there is no guarantee that the parts of the bill we support will become law because of our evidence. There’s also no guarantee that any parts of the bill we don’t agree with will be changed as a result of the evidence we send.

**When is the deadline?**

Please email your evidence submission with the subject line ‘Written evidence submission’ to [justicereform@rapecrisisscotland.org.uk](mailto:justicereform@rapecrisisscotland.org.uk) by **Monday 7 August**.