

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill

Stage 1 debate

15th December 2020

Age Scotland welcomes the opportunity to brief MSPs ahead of this important debate.

We believe the introduction of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill is an important step that will help to further protect people in Scotland, including older people from instances of hate crime.

As the national charity for older people in Scotland, it is our view that this Bill will have three major benefits:

- Enable the police in Scotland to act on reports of age hostility.
- Give older people confidence in reporting hate crimes that they experience.
- Act as a strong deterrent to those who would act out on age hostility.

Age Scotland is supportive of any legal mechanism that will provide further protection to older people who have been targeted because of their age. Legislation can be at the forefront of changing attitudes and providing further legal ramifications for age hostility will be a strong statement of intent that Scotland does not accept this behaviour. Having stronger legal repercussions for age hostility can act as a deterrent from would-be criminals, and also prove to older people that any abuse they report will be taken seriously and help enable them to have a voice.

The introduction of age hostility as a statutory aggravation was a recommendation from Lord Bracadale, who independently reviewed Scotland's current hate crime legislation through extensive engagement. We have supported this recommendation from the outset, recognising Lord Bracadale's vast experience and expertise of the Scottish legal system. We would encourage members to also support the addition of age hostility to the proposed Hate Crime legislation.

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Age Scotland is a registered charity (#SC010100), and company limited by guarantee (#153343), in Scotland at the above address.

Want to find out more?

As Scotland's national charity supporting people over the age of 50, Age Scotland works to improve older people's lives and promote their rights and interests. We aim to help people love later life, whatever their circumstances. We want Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow older.

Our Policy, Communications and Campaigns team research, analyse and comment on a wide range of public policy issues affecting older people in Scotland.

Our work is guided by the views and needs of older people themselves.

Further information

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