



Scottish Government Consultation on Prisoner Voting

Community Justice Scotland's (CJS's) corporate plan aims to ensure that people with convictions are effectively rehabilitated and reintegrated into the community. Given this focus CJS welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Scottish Government consultation on prisoner voting.

The right to vote is a fundamental expression of citizenship, providing people with an opportunity to participate in the democratic processes and to reinforce their engagement with their wider community.

CJS supports the view expressed by the Scottish Parliament's Equalities & Human Rights Committee in their report last year that a blanket ban on prisoners voting is not appropriate. The right to vote provides an opportunity for people to exercise civic responsibility.

CJS supports the opportunity outlined in the consultation for the right to vote to be extended to prisoners. In our view, if the Scottish Government intends that enfranchisement should be limited as outlined in their response to the Committee, the right to vote should be offered to prisoners serving sentences of up to 4 years - as a minimum. Consideration should also be given to providing an opportunity for people nearing the end of lengthier sentences to be given voting rights. This could take place in the year preceding their release, as part of their rehabilitation and to facilitate their reintegration.

Community Justice Scotland
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