

Consultation on Prisoner Voting

Page 1 of 5

Closes 8 Mar 2019

Questions

1. Do you think that prisoners' right to vote in Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections should be linked to the length of their sentence?

☒ Yes

☐ No

2. If your answer to Question 1 is 'no', what would be your preferred approach to extending prisoners' voting rights?

3. If your answer to Question 1 is 'yes', what length of sentence would be appropriate as the eligibility threshold for prisoner voting rights?

- ☒ 12 months or less
- ☐ 6 months or less
- ☐ Another duration

4. If your answer to the above is 'another duration', please specify this here.

5. Do you have any comments on the practicalities of prisoner voting?

As a Local Authority with two prisons within its geographical boundary which take prisoners from all over Scotland, we would support an arrangement whereby prisoners were able to vote only in the location of the prisoner's ordinary residence. This would avoid the skewing of votes for a potential significant population. The electoral roll provides a mechanism for linking prisoners to their last residence prior to their imprisonment, however it is our view that many prisoners will not have registered on the roll. We suggest that a system will be required which identifies the various constituencies for which each prisoner is eligible to vote at the point of their prison sentence commencing to avoid any dispute.

6. Do you have any other comments that have not been captured in the responses you have provided above?

It is our opinion that extending voting rights to prisoners serving a sentence or a series of sentences of up to 12 months is fair and reasonable.

Fixing the threshold at 12 months or less would be consistent with the distinction within the Scottish criminal justice system between the sentencing powers of courts of summary jurisdiction and courts of solemn jurisdiction.



