

Justice Committee

Limitation (Childhood Abuse) (Scotland) Bill

Written submission from Rape Crisis Scotland

Rape Crisis Scotland works to support survivors of sexual violence, and to campaign to improve responses to this violence. In the past year, rape crisis services across Scotland supported 3,315 survivors of sexual violence: just over 28% had been sexually abused as children.

Rape Crisis Scotland welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence on aspects of the Limitation (Childhood Abuse) (Scotland) Bill.

1. Rape Crisis Scotland supports the policy intent behind this bill, which is to improve access to civil justice for survivors of childhood abuse. The nature of child sexual abuse can mean that it can take a long time for survivors to feel able to disclose what has happened to them. Many survivors in touch with Rape Crisis tell us that it took them many years before they felt able to speak about what happened, and longer to seek support from agencies such as ours.
2. Due to the nature of child sexual abuse, the current three year restriction on bringing civil claims impacts significantly in limiting access to justice.
3. We support the removal of the restriction and its retrospective applications.
4. We agreed that it should apply to all children, not just those abused in care. The silencing impact of abuse applies regardless of where the abuse takes place, and we consider that our legal framework should recognise this.

Sandy Brindley
National Coordinator
Rape Crisis Scotland
13 January 2017