

## **PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **FAO: LOCAL REPORTERS**

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June

### **KIRKCALDY MSP WELCOMES PASSAGE OF CHILDHOOD ABUSE BILL FOR SURVIVORS SEEKING JUSTICE**

Kirkcaldy MSP, David Torrance has welcomed the passage of the Limitation Childhood Abuse Scotland Bill in the Scottish Parliament. The Bill, which will have retrospective effect, removes the three year time limit in which victims of childhood abuse can bring a civil action against their abuser – meaning that survivors can pursue justice later in life.

Commenting, SNP MSP David Torrance said:

“This Bill is a big step forward in ensuring that survivors of childhood abuse are able to access justice later in life.

“While bringing a civil action may not be the right solution for all survivors of child abuse, it is vital that survivors have the choice to come forward as and when they feel ready to do so.

“Those who have suffered abuse as a child may delay disclosing the trauma for a whole host of reasons, including a difficulty processing what has happened to them, feelings of shame, suppressed memories or indeed pressure from the abuser. And it’s important that they have the choice to take the time to come forward.

“While it remains the case that the courts will weigh up the available evidence in each individual case, these changes to the law will give survivors the all-important choice about what actions they can legally take to seek justice.”

**ENDS**

NOTES

<https://news.gov.scot/news/support-for-survivors-of-abuse>

Background

- The Limitation (Childhood Abuse) (Scotland) Bill was introduced in the Scottish Parliament by the Scottish Government on the 16th November 2016, and was designed to improve the lives of survivors of historical childhood abuse in Scotland.
- Holyrood’s Justice Committee was designated the lead committee for the Bill’s consideration.
- A call for evidence was issued and fifteen responses were received.
- The Justice Committee supports the general principles of the Bill and made a number of recommendations relating to the more detailed aspects of the Bill, including the definition of abuse and the provisions relating to previously raised cases.

- Prior to the passage of this Bill - victims had just three years from the date of their injury - or from their 16th birthday - to bring a court action. This time limit has been removed.
- The new Bill does not enable claims to be brought in respect of abuse which took place prior to 1964. The justice committee has called for the Scottish Government to explore other options for redress for this group.
- The circumstances giving rise to the court action must be defined as sexual, physical or emotional abuse.
- The Bill is no panacea and pursuing a civil action will not be the right solution for all survivors.

Further info: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-40357621>

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