

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Carloway  
Lord Justice Clerk  
Chair  
Scottish Sentencing Council  
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Edinburgh  
EH1 1RQ

All correspondence c/o:  
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7 October 2015

Dear Lord Carloway

**CONSIDERATION OF PETITION [PE1565](#)**

*Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to increase the maximum possible sentence for violent re-offenders who commit murder to be a whole of life custodial sentence.*

The Public Petitions Committee of the Scottish Parliament has been considering the above petition which is seeking the introduction of the whole of life tariff for some life prisoners. The Committee last considered the petition on 6 October 2015 and it agreed that I write to you regarding the petition.

In the course of its considerations of the petition, the Committee has sought information from the Scottish Government on how many prisoners with a life sentence have punishment parts of their sentence which will mean that they are unlikely to be eligible for parole before the end of their life. The Scottish Government provided the Committee figures on life prisoners currently in Scottish Prisons and that information can be found here:

[http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4\\_PublicPetitionsCommittee/General%20Documents/20150814\\_PE1565\\_A\\_Scottish\\_Government.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_PublicPetitionsCommittee/General%20Documents/20150814_PE1565_A_Scottish_Government.pdf)

The Scottish Government also stated that the matter was something that could be considered by the Scottish Sentencing Council when it is fully established. The Committee would be very grateful if you would consider including the issue of whole of life tariffs in the Scottish Sentencing Council's work programme once it is fully established. The Committee would find it helpful if you could reply to this letter by 3 November 2015.

Yours sincerely

**Michael McMahon MSP**

**Convenor**

**Public Petitions Committee**



The Right Honourable Lord Carloway  
The Lord Justice Clerk

Parliament House  
Edinburgh, EH1 1RQ

23 October 2015

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Dear Mr McMahon

**PETITION PE1565 - WHOLE OF LIFE SENTENCES FOR VIOLENT RE-OFFENDERS**

I am pleased to be able to inform you that the Scottish Sentencing Council was formally established on 19 October this year under the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010. The Council is scheduled to meet for the first time on 14 December.

The Council's first key tasks will include consideration of how it should carry out its statutory functions and the priorities for its programme of work. As well as deciding what topics to prepare sentencing guidelines on, it will need to consider the most appropriate format for guidelines and the methodology for developing their content. These will be critical pieces of work, which will be fundamental to the successful delivery of the Council's statutory objectives.

I will ensure that the Council is made aware of this petition and correspondence when it meets in December and will write to you again once the Council is able to consider the matter.

The Committee may be interested to note that details of Council activity and arrangements for meetings will be published on the Council's website in due course. The website can be accessed at: [www.scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk).

Yours sincerely

COLIN SUTHERLAND  
Lord Carloway