

Poultry Welfare – Laying Hens

Consultation on a proposal to phase out the use of cages in Scotland’s laying hen sector

March 2024

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Part 1 – Introduction

The Scottish Government is committed to improving the welfare of laying hens by addressing the issue of confinement, so that birds have the freedoms to exhibit their normal behaviours.

In the last decade or so, and particularly since the 2012 ban on (barren) battery cages, there has been a gradual shift in focus from the public and animal welfare organisations towards farming systems which do not closely confine animals. A survey in 2020, found that 88% of the British public consider using cages in farming is cruel and 77% of those surveyed supported a complete ban on the use of cages in farming (YouGov 2020¹). In 2019, an ‘End the Cage Age’ petition calling on the UK government to ban all cages for farm animals resulted in over 100,000 signatures, triggering a debate in Parliament in March 2020². In August 2021, another petition was started calling for the UK government to legislate to ‘End the Cage Age’³.

A similar ‘End the Cage Age’ European Citizens’ Initiative was launched across Europe and was supported by over 1 million citizens across the EU in 2018. In response, the EU Commission announced in June 2021 its plan to bring forward a legislative proposal to prohibit the use of cages for all farmed livestock, including enriched cages for laying hens. This legislative proposal was to have been introduced in 2023 but is now anticipated for 2024. The Commission intended the legislation to enter into force from 2027, but the initial announcement did not address what the phase out periods would be. In the European Union, Luxembourg and Austria have already banned the use of enriched cages for laying hens. Germany, Czech Republic, and Slovakia are in the process of phasing them out and Australia has stated that it aims to ban the use of cages for egg production by 2036.

In 2016 the major supermarkets pledged that they would stop selling shell eggs from hens kept in enriched cages by 2025 and some have already done so. In addition, some retailers have extended the 2025 pledge to the eggs used in their processed products, such as powder or liquid egg.

This drive to ban cages reflects a demand from society to move to more ethical production systems. The Scottish Government has heard these calls and wants to bring welfare standards in line with wider public values, as well as remaining aligned with likely developments across the EU.

The proposal on which we seek your views is to ban enriched cage production entirely, including the few (barren) battery cages which remain in use for laying hen units with fewer than 350 birds, pullets and breeder layers. The policy proposal aims to improve animal welfare standards in a way which is also sustainable and economically viable for the Scottish egg industry.

The consultation invites comments on the impact of the proposal on the welfare of laying hens; the laying hen industry; consumers; the environment and trade. The consultation will help determine the Scottish Government’s future policy in this area.

¹ [YouGov - Compassion in World Farming Survey Results.pdf](#)

² [Caging of Farm Animals - Monday 16 March 2020 - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

³ [End the Cage Age for all farmed animals - Petitions \(parliament.uk\)](#)

Scope

This proposal would prohibit the use of cages throughout the entire Scottish laying hen sector, including laying hen units with fewer than 350 birds, pullets, and breeder layers.

Animal welfare is a devolved policy responsibility. The proposals outlined in this consultation relate to Scotland only.

Audience

Anyone can reply to this consultation. The Scottish Government particularly encourages responses from individuals and businesses covered by this consultation including those that are not directly involved in egg production such as the following:

- Academic institutions;
- Animal welfare organisations;
- Consumers;
- Egg packers;
- Farm assurance schemes;
- Farming organisations;
- Laying hen breeders;
- Laying hen producers;
- Broiler Breeders
- Broiler Breeder producers
- Pullet rearers;
- Local authorities (LA's);
- Retailers;
- Trade bodies; and
- The veterinary profession.

Duration

The consultation will run for 12 weeks.

Opening on **2 April 2024** and closing on **25 June 2024**.

How to make an enquiry about this consultation

If you have any queries about this consultation please contact the Scottish Government's Animal Welfare Team at: AnimalHealthWelfare@gov.scot

Responding to this consultation paper

Please respond to this consultation using the Scottish Government's consultation hub: "Citizen Space". You can access and respond to this consultation at:

<https://consult.gov.scot/agriculture-and-rural-economy/consultation-use-of-cages-in-laying-hen-sector>

You can save and return to your response while the consultation remains open. **However, please ensure that your consultation response is submitted via Citizen Space before the closing date of 25 June 2024.**

If you are unable to submit your response through our consultation hub, then please submit it along with a completed Respondent Information Form (which has been published alongside this consultation paper) to:

Laying Hen Welfare Consultation
Animal Welfare Team
The Scottish Government
P Spur
Saughton House
Broomhouse Drive
EH11 3XD

Please do try to reply using the Citizen Space hub as it makes administration of consultations considerably easier.

We appreciate that many respondees will only have an interest in one particular part of this consultation and may therefore only wish to respond to the section of relevance. Where this is the case you should complete the section of interest using Citizen Space or, alternatively, complete the consultation questionnaire and return it to the address above along with the Respondee Information Form.

Please try to answer all the questions; however if you are unable to answer any particular question then please feel free to move on to the next. Please note that you will be asked to explain the reasons for your answer as appropriate in the space provided in the questionnaire on Citizen Space.

When answering the consultation questions, we ask that you take into consideration the information provided in this document alongside your own relevant knowledge or personal experience. All opinions are welcome.

Handling your response

If you respond using Citizen Space, you will be directed to the About You page before submitting your response. Please indicate on the Respondee Information Form how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our [privacy policy](#).

Next steps in the process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be

made publicly available at <http://consult.gov.scot>. If you use Citizen Space to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

When the consultation closes all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us decide on whether to progress our proposals. Responses will be published where permission to do so has been given.

A consultation summary report will also be published that will include an anonymised analysis of the responses received and set out the next steps.

Scottish Government consultation process

Consultation is an essential part of the policy making process. It gives you the opportunity to have your say on what we do or propose to do and it gives us valuable insight, perspective, and evidence that in turn informs and shapes what we do.

All Scottish Government consultations are available online and can be found at:

<http://consult.gov.scot>.

Consultation responses received are analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. We publish a report for every consultation we undertake. Depending on the nature of the consultation undertaken, the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review,
- inform the development of a particular policy,
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals,
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented.

While the details of individual circumstances described in a response to a consultation may usefully inform the policy process, public consultations cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant body as appropriate.

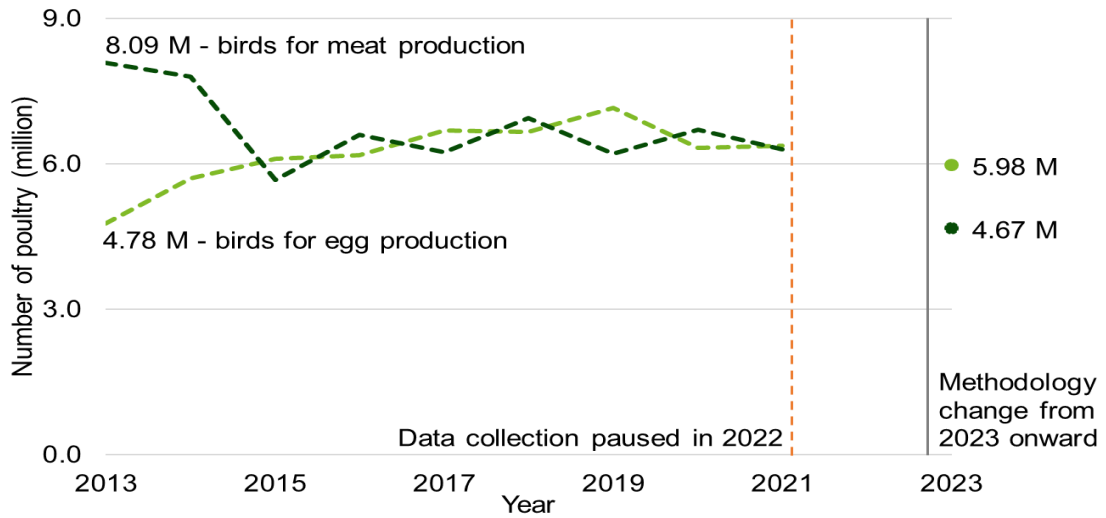
This consultation is in line with the Scottish Government's Consultation Principles. **Please note that a consultation period of 12 weeks applies.** More information and consultation guidance can be found at –

[Consultations in the Scottish Government: guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

Part 2 – Consultation

The Scottish 2023 June Agricultural Census estimates that there were 5.98 million poultry birds for egg production and an estimated 4.67 million for meat production^{4*}

Figure 1. – Number of birds for meat and egg production between 2013 to 2023.



There are currently four methods used for egg production in Scotland –

Figure 2 Production methods, bird numbers, Number of sites and Percentage of Scottish National egg laying flock – [Source SG Gallus database February 2024]

Production Type	Bird numbers	Number of sites	% breakdown
Barn	367,676	10	5.71
Cage	1,128,631	15	17.52
Free Range	4,571,068	198	70.97
Organic	373,115	28	5.79
	6,440,490	251	

The Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations 2010⁵ detail the conditions under which farmed animals⁶ and, more specifically, all laying hens⁷ must be kept. In 1999, (barren) ‘battery’ cages for laying hens (for keepers with 350 or more birds) were banned throughout the European Union, including in the UK, but with a 12-year transition period to 1 January 2012 before the ban came fully into effect. Due to the small size (area per hen of 550cm² – less than an A4 piece of paper), and barren environment with no litter,

⁴ [Tell us what you think - Results from the Scottish Agricultural Census: June 2023 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot) *Poultry estimates for 2023 were not comparable to previous years due to methodological improvements

⁵ [The Welfare of Farmed Animals \(Scotland\) Regulations 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

⁶ The Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations define a ‘farmed animal’ as an animal bred or kept for the production of food, wool or skin or other farming purposes, but not including - (a) a fish, reptile or amphibian; (b) an animal whilst at, or solely intended for use in, (b) a competition, show or cultural or sporting event or activity; (c) an experimental or laboratory animal; or (d) an animal living in the wild.

⁷ The term ‘laying hen’ means a hen of the species *Gallus gallus* which has reached laying maturity and is kept for the production of eggs not intended for hatching.

perches or separate or secluded nest area, (barren) battery cages were banned as they presented inherent severe disadvantages for the welfare of laying hens.

However, the ban on (barren) battery cages targeted commercial scale producers and so keepers with fewer than 350 laying hens were excluded from the current legislation which bans (barren) battery cages.

Currently Laying hens in cage systems must have —

- at least 750cm² of cage area per hen, 600cm² of which shall be usable area; the height of the cage other than that above the usable area shall be at least 20cm at every point and no cage shall have a total area that is less than 2000cm²;
- a nest;
- litter such that pecking and scratching are possible; and
- appropriate perches allowing at least 15cm per hen.

Feed

- A feed trough which may be used without restriction must be provided and its length must be at least 12cm multiplied by the number of hens in the cage.

Water

- Each cage must have a drinking system appropriate to the size of the group and where nipple drinkers are provided, at least 2 nipple drinkers or 2 drinking cups must be within the reach of each hen.

In Great Britain (GB), producers are not permitted to keep breeder layer birds (parent stock) in cages under voluntary farm assurance schemes rules, such as Red Tractor and RSPCA Assured. We therefore assume that the impact of this proposal on these producers will be minimal, but we would like to formally capture this part of the production chain. Breeder layers kept to produce hatching eggs for the next generation of egg laying hens (supplying eggs for consumption) are not currently within scope of the cage requirements in The Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations 2010.

Proposal

Consumer demand for laying hen systems which do not confine the birds is reflected in the market split in method of production in Scotland. The latest figures demonstrate that 82% of egg production is from non-cage egg production farms in Scotland.

At the end of 2022, in GB overall 61.4% of production was free range – significantly larger than any European Union country, 28.1% in enriched cages, 3% organic and 6.8% barn. In the UK, free-range sales represent 71% of retail egg sales, double their level in 2004 (32%).

In 2016, as a result of this gradual shift towards non-cage production, the major supermarkets pledged that they would stop selling shell eggs from hens kept in enriched cages by 2025 and some have already done so. In addition, some retailers have extended the 2025 pledge to the eggs used in their processed products, such as powder or liquid egg.

Whilst the retailer pledge is welcome, it only goes so far and will not, on its own, raise welfare standards across the whole of the laying hen industry. Government intervention is needed to address the welfare of laying hens producing eggs for those retailers who

haven't signed the pledge and for the food service and egg processing markets to ensure a complete ban.

In considering how best to improve the welfare of laying hens, we have the following three options for consideration:

- Option 1 - a 2030 ban on enriched cage production
- Option 2 - a 2030 ban on the instalment of new cages leading to a 2034 ban on enriched cage production. This is the suggested option for consideration as we consider that it most effectively balances improvements in bird welfare and ensures sustainability for the laying hen sector, as well as being aligned with possible changes in the EU as far as these can be foreseen at this point in time.
- Option 3 (the non-regulatory option), - an information campaign aimed at consumers to encourage all retailers who have not signed up to the retailer pledge and caterers to commit to stop stocking/selling eggs or egg products from enriched cages by 2034.

Options 1-2 also include a ban on (barren) battery cages for pullets, breeder layers, and laying hen units with fewer than 350 birds, which are currently exempt from the (barren) battery cage ban. This would result in a ban on all cages throughout the entire laying hen sector, including small-scale commercial producers and hobby-keepers.

Option 2 is our preferred policy option and the one on which views are invited in this consultation. This option seeks to achieve the policy objective by balancing improvements in the welfare of laying hens and pullets, whilst ensuring sustainability for Scottish laying hen producers and pullet rearers. A 10-year transition period to phase out the use of existing enriched cages seeks to give industry an appropriate time period to move to non-cage systems.

Our proposal to phase out the use of cages includes the use of combination ('combi') housing. Combi housing is a multi-tiered system which allow birds to roam when the cage doors are opened, but is a caged system when the doors are closed and thus confines the birds. These systems are already not permitted under the egg industry's British Lion Code of Practice, covering the whole of the production process.

The proposal would also ban any (barren) battery cages which remain in use for laying hen units with fewer than 350 birds, pullets and breeder layers. This would result in a ban on all cages throughout the entire laying hen sector in Scotland, including small-scale commercial producers and hobby-keepers.

The below sets out the core elements of the suggested policy proposal for consultation, Option 2:

From 2030, a ban on the building or bringing into service for the first time any enriched cage system for the keeping of laying hens (including those in establishments with fewer than 350 birds), pullets and breeder layers;

From 2030, a ban on the use of existing (barren) and enriched cages for the keeping of laying hens in establishments with fewer than 350 birds, pullets and breeder layer birds, and;

From 2034, a ban on the use of existing enriched cages for the keeping of laying hens (including those in establishments with fewer than 350 birds), pullets and breeder layer birds.

Impact of proposal

For the proposes of this consultation we have used industry recognised average figures to estimate the costs per bird for converting from enriched cages to barn and the production costs per dozen eggs for each for enriched cages, barn eggs and free range eggs.

Consultation questions

Animal Welfare

1. Our aim is to improve the welfare of laying hens, pullets and breeder layers and the policy proposal seeks to achieve this by reducing confinement of birds and ensuring that their behavioural needs are better met in non-caged systems.

Q1. a) Do you think that a ban on cages and a move to non-cage systems will allow birds to better express their normal behaviours?

- Yes
- Partially
- No

Q1. b) Please explain your answer to Q1. a).

Q2. a) Do you think that housing birds in non-cage systems will improve other welfare outcomes in addition to normal behaviours?

- Yes
- Partially
- No

Q2. b) Please explain your answer to Q2. a).

Policy proposal

Q3. a) Do you agree with our proposal to introduce a ban on the installation of new enriched cages across the laying hen sector (laying hens, pullets and breeder layers) in 2030?

- Yes
- No, it is too early
- No, I don't agree with a ban

Q3. b) Please explain your answer to Q3. a).

Q4. a) Do you agree that a 10-year transition period, starting in 2024 to a full ban on enriched cages in Scotland across the laying hen sector in 2034 (laying hens, pullets and breeder layers) is the right phase in period?

- Yes
- No, it is too long
- No, it is too short

- No, I don't agree with a ban

Q4. b) Please explain your answer to Q4. a).

Q5. a) Do you agree with the proposal to ban (barren) battery cages in 2030: for smaller scale commercial units or hobby-keepers with fewer than 350 laying hens?

- Yes
- No

Q5. b) Please explain your answer to Q5. a)

Q6. a) Do you agree with the proposal to ban (barren) battery cages in 2030: for breeder layers?

- Yes
- No

Q6. b) Please explain your answer to Q6. a)

Q7. a) Do you agree with the proposal to ban (barren) battery cages in 2030: for pullets?

- Yes
- No

Q7. b) Please explain your answer to Q7. a)

Capital costs

The figures detailed below are estimated average capital costs of converting enriched cages to barn or to free range:

- i) £35⁸-£42⁹ per hen place for new barn buildings or to free range. This cost relates to the upfront capital cost of installing a new building, appropriate equipment (such as ventilation systems, feed systems and perches), and purchasing/renting any land required, and;
- ii) £16-£20¹⁰ per hen place of converting existing capacity from enriched cage production to barn production. The estimated capital costs of converting from enriched cages are smaller than the costs of building equivalent new barns because it is assumed that the building structure could remain. Nevertheless, there would still be the cost of removal and disposal of the enriched cages and the installation of new equipment for non-cage systems (such as ventilation systems, feed systems and perches) where necessary.

Q8. a) Do you agree with these estimates?

- Yes
- No, the costs are too high
- No, the costs are too low

Q8. b) If you answered 'No' to Q8. a), please provide any evidence you can to support your view.

Production costs

2. The estimated average production costs (excluding housing) per dozen eggs from enriched cage, barn, and free-range systems range from 77.8p/doz¹¹ for enriched cages to 92.8p/doz¹² for free range eggs.

Q9. a) Do you agree with the estimated production costs detailed above?

- Yes
- No

⁸ John Nix Pocketbook for Farm Management 2024 54th Edition

⁹ The British Free Range Egg Producers Association Costings Portal
<https://www.bfrepa.co.uk/costings>

¹⁰ Article from Poultry World "From cages to cage free – an industry perspective" 27/06/2022
<https://www.poultryworld.net/poultry/layers/from-cages-to-cage-free-an-industry-perspective/> Plus adjusted average inflation

¹¹ John Nix Pocketbook for Farm Management 2024 54th Edition

¹² John Nix Pocketbook for Farm Management 2024 54th Edition

Q9. b) If you answered 'No' to Q9. a), please explain your answer and provide any evidence you can to support your view.

Laying hen industry

3. This section considers impacts of this proposal across the industry and seeks views from those producing breeder layers, those rearing pullets and laying hens (including those smaller scale commercial producers keeping fewer than 350 laying hens).

Q10. a) In the event of a ban on the use of cages, what production system will you move to and why?

- a barn system
- a free-range system
- an organic system
- exit the industry
- unsure

Q10. b) Please explain your answer to Q10. a).

Enriched cage production

Q11. The number of birds that can be housed in non-cage systems are lower than the number housed in enriched cages. Can you estimate the likely fall in capacity when moving from a enriched cage to each of these systems?

- a) barn system
- b) free-range system
- c) organic system

Q12. a) To account for the likely reduction in capacity, existing producers may need to build new housing, and obtain planning permission for this. If you are able to provide an indication or estimate as to how long it has taken or would take to obtain planning permission:

- 3 – 6 months
- 6 – 12 months
- 12 – 18 months
- Longer than 18 months

Q12. b) If you are able to provide either a costing or estimated cost to build new housing, please complete the following:

- a) for a free-range system
- b) for a barn system
- c) for an organic system

Q13. a) We have assumed in the consultation that it would take 6 months of production downtime to convert from a enriched cage to a non-cage system.

a) Do you agree with this assumption?

- Yes
- No

Q13. b) Please explain your answer to Q13. a)

Q13. c) How would this vary according to size of flock?

Q14. If you have enriched cages, when were you planning to replace or refurbish the cages?

- Next 3-5 years
- Next 5-8 years
- Next 8-12 years
- Not considered
- I was already planning to switch to a non-cage system

Q15. Can you provide an estimate of the cost of this replacement per laying hen?

Q16. In your view, what training (in hours) would be needed for keepers currently working with enriched cage systems to be able to manage a barn or free-range flock?

Q17. What is the likely cost of this training?

Pullet rearing

4. The consultation considers two types of non-cage systems used for pullet rearing, as an alternative to enriched cages. These are a single floor litter system (flat deck) and a multi-tier litter system. This section seeks information on impacts of moving from a cage to a type of litter system.

Q18. Please estimate how much it would cost per pullet to convert from a cage to a litter system? i.e., including stockman training cost. Please specify whether this would be for a single or a multi-tier system.

Q19. a) Please estimate how long it would take (in months) to convert from a cage to a litter system?

- 1-2 Months
- 3-4 Months
- 5-6 Months
- More than 6 months – please specify

Q19. b) Please specify which type of litter system. E.g. Flat deck, multi-tier, all litter

Q20. a) What is the difference in production cost per pullet of rearing in a cage versus in a litter system?

Q20 b) Please specify which type of litter system and, if possible, the breakdown of the costs.

Breeder layers

Q21. a) If you are a breeder layer producer using cages rather than slats or deep litter please set out the impact this policy proposal will have on your business? For example, in terms of production and planning costs and cost of changing the infrastructure.

Q21. b) Would you consider moving to a non-caged system if there was no legal requirement to do so? Please explain your answer.

Q21. c) Would you consider leaving the sector altogether if a ban on caged-hen laying was introduced? Please explain your answer.

(Barren) battery cage production

Q22. a) If you are a laying hen producer keeping fewer than 350 birds in (barren) battery cages, please set out the impact that prohibiting the use of all cages for laying hens will have on your business? For example, in terms of production and planning costs and cost of changing the infrastructure.

Q22. b) Would you consider moving to a non-caged system if there was no legal requirement to do so? Please explain your answer.

Q22. c) Would you consider leaving the sector altogether if a ban on caged-hen laying was introduced? Please explain your answer.

Further comments

Q23. Please provide any comments or evidence on the environmental impacts the proposed policy may have.

Q24. Please provide any comments or evidence you feel should be considered concerning the socio-economic impact the proposed policy may have on both producers and consumers. Please explain your answer.

Q25. Please provide any further considerations you feel should be noted when considering this policy proposal. Please explain your answer.

Part 3. About you

Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will still take account of your views in our analysis but we will not publish your response, quote anything that you have said or list your name. We will regard your response as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our [privacy policy](#). By clicking submit you agree to our privacy policy.

Q26. What is your name?

Q27. What is your email address?

Q28. Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Q28 a). If not as an individual, what is your organisation?

Q28. b), Further information about your organisation response (optional)

Q29. Please select from the following options that which best describes your reason for taking part in this consultation (Please select all relevant options).

Laying hen sector:

- Breeder
- Pullet rearer
- Egg producer
- Egg packer
- Animal welfare organisation
- Retailers
- Trade body
- Consumer;
- Farm assurance scheme body
- Farming organisations
- Gamebird breeder
- Quail egg producer
- Local authorities (LA's);
- Veterinary profession
- Academic institutions
- Other [please specify in the box below]

If selecting "Other" - please specify your reason for taking part in this consultation by typing in the box [i.e. keeper of laying hens, consumer, veterinary advisor]:

Q30. The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Publish response with name
- Publish response only (without name)
- Do not publish response

Information for organisations only:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' refers only to your name, not your organisation's name. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

Q31. We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No

I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy.

1.1 Privacy Policy

Privacy - [Scottish Government Privacy Policy](#)

This privacy policy tells you what to expect when the Scottish Government collects your personal information.

Why we collect personal data

We gather this information in order to:

- improve the site by monitoring how you use it
- respond to any feedback you send us, if you've asked us to
- send out email alerts to those who have requested them
- record and/or publish your response to a survey or consultation
- publish your comment on a blog or discussion site

The personal data you send us can be viewed by authorised people in the Scottish government, supplier organisations, agencies and public bodies.

Data we collect

1. Visitors to our websites

We use a third party service, Google Analytics, to collect information on how you use the site, using cookies and page tagging techniques.

The information we - and Google - collect doesn't identify anyone, and is kept for a maximum of 38 months. If we do want to collect personally identifiable information through the site, we will be up front about it.

2. Email alerts

We collect your email address, name and subscription preferences when you sign up to our email alerts. We also track how our emails are used - for example whether you open them and which links you click on.

If you've signed up for email alerts, you can unsubscribe or change your settings at any time by selecting the 'unsubscribe' link that appears in every email.

Once you have unsubscribed, your details will be deleted immediately from the system.

3. Feedback

If you contact us asking a question or giving feedback, we collect your email address and any other personal data contained in your message. If you contact us asking for information, we may need to contact other government bodies to find that information.

4. Consultations

We collect names and email addresses with every response we receive through our consultation platform <http://consult.gov.scot>.

Email addresses are used to send an acknowledgement of response following submission. They may also be used to contact you in the future in relation to the consultation exercise if you give consent to be contacted.

Where permission is given, we publish responses. We include personal data where permission has been given to do so. We never publish email or postal addresses.

5. **Blogs and discussion sites**

We collect names or usernames, and email addresses with each comment. This data is kept as long as the blog post or dialogue remains published.

Links to other websites

When we link to other websites, we encourage you to read the privacy policy statements contained on those sites.

Your rights

You have a right of access to any personal data we hold about you, by making a Subject Access Request (SAR).

In addition, if you believe that the data we hold is inaccurate or incomplete you can ask us to update our records. If you are unhappy with the way in which we process your personal data you can request that we stop or restrict the processing we complete using your personal data or ask us to delete the personal data we hold about you.

Find out more about your rights on the Information Commissioner's site.

In some circumstances we may not be able to comply with your request. This is because some of these rights are conditional and can only be applied in certain circumstances and/or where there is no compelling reason to continue to process your personal data.

Contact:

Data Protection Officer
Victoria Quay
Commercial Street
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

Email: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.scot

Complaints

If you feel we have been unable, or unwilling, to resolve your information rights concern, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO are the supervisory authority responsible for data protection in the UK.

For further information, including independent data protection advice and information in relation to your rights, you can contact the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 08456 30 60 60

Website: www.ico.org.uk

You can also report any concerns here: <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/handling/>



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