

From: [Kim Zoe Evans](#)
To: [sentencingcouncil](#)
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To whom it may concern,

As a community member deeply invested in justice and fairness, I am writing to support the ****#YourReferenceAintRelevant**** campaign and the removal of good character references in sentencing for crimes such as child sexual abuse, domestic violence, and rape.

A good character reference should have no weight, offenders still made choices that have deeply traumatised individual/s. Offenders know to be on their best behaviour around certain community members. Many deliberately present to the community as 'upstanding citizens' while abusing others in private. Good character references reward their behaviour of hiding their true nature to their wider community and does not provide true justice for victims.

These references allow offenders to weaponise trust and reputation — often the very tools they used to commit their crimes. Allowing good character to mitigate sentencing retraumatises survivors and undermines the severity of these offences. Our justice system must do better. Survivors should not have to endure a process that prioritises an offender's reputation over their voices and the harm they have endured.

I urge the Sentencing Council to deliver meaningful reform by recommending abolishing good character references in these cases. It's time to create a legal system that truly prioritises justice and the well-being of survivors. Thank you for considering this submission.

Thank you
Kim