

From: Georgina Bell  
Sent: Friday, 14 February 2025  
To: sentencingcouncil  
Subject: Submission Your Reference Ain't Relevant

Dear Sentencing Council,

I am writing in support of the #YourReferenceAintRelevant Campaign.

As a victim and survivor of childhood sexual assault and grooming, I have a personal concern for the current use of "good character references" in court in regards to childhood sexual abuse, domestic violence, and rape.

The ability of external individuals, known to the abuser, to share their "good" personal experiences of the abusers character, is completely unjust, diminishes the criminal severity and is another way victims are traumatised beyond the period of abuse, by their abuser.

The long term psychological damage experienced by victims is horrific enough, it is disgraceful that good character references are currently able to lessen the sentence for abuse crimes, in court.

From personal experience, individuals who are capable of grooming victims and their families/ support networks to gain access to the victim in the first place, mean they are already able to put on a "character facade" that makes them seem like "good people". Thus rendering the legitimacy of their "good character" all together.

It is time you prioritise justice for survivors, over the reputation of offenders.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Kind Regards,  
Georgina Bell