

From: [Joanne Roberts](#)
To: [sentencingcouncil](#)
Subject: Good character in sentencing - Submission
Date: Wednesday, 4 December 2024 5:36:58 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

I strongly believe that character references should be abolished in the sentencing of sex offenders. These references only serve to diminish the severity of the offence and harm the recovery of victim-survivors.

In cases of sexual offending, “good character” is often part of the crime itself. Offenders use their good reputation to gain trust, infiltrate vulnerable environments, and manipulate victims, especially in cases of grooming. This is how serial offenders often evade detection, using their character to disguise their criminal behaviour.

Focusing on an offender’s past good conduct in sentencing not only misrepresents the nature of the crime but also distracts from the needs of the victim and the goal of justice. It risks re-traumatising victims by shifting attention away from their suffering and the offender’s responsibility.

For these reasons, character references should have no place in sentencing for sex offenders, and the focus should remain on the harm caused, deterrence, and justice for the victim.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Sincerely,

Joanne Roberts