

**From:** [Amy Johnson](#)  
**To:** [sentencingcouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Public submission re: review of good character references  
**Date:** Monday, 3 February 2025 6:38:21 PM

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Good evening,

As a survivor, I am writing to support the #YourReferenceAintRelevant campaign and call for the removal of good character references in sentencing for crimes like child sexual abuse, domestic violence, and rape. During my childhood, my abuser deliberately used his good character in the eyes of other to groom and abuse me under my family's nose. Devastatingly, he maintained his good standing in the eyes of many of my loved ones after I came forward and exposed his heinous acts. I never pursued justice through the legal system because of the pain this caused; hearing my offender's "good character" referenced during the legal process by my loved ones would have been unbearable. His reputation should not matter more than the harm he caused me—not in the eyes of my family and not in the eyes of the law. Because I did not feel I would have received justice through legal channels, he is still a free man: free to commit the same heinous acts at will and traumatise other innocent young people.

These good character references diminish the severity of the crime and fail to acknowledge how offenders use their perceived trustworthiness to commit these acts.

Good character references should have no place in cases like this. By allowing them, the justice system undermines the accountability offenders should face and retraumatizes survivors. I urge the Sentencing Council to recommend the removal of good character references from sentencing in all of these cases. It's time for the legal system to reflect the reality of these crimes in its processes.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Sincerely,

Amy Johnson