

From:
To: [sentencingcouncil](#)
Subject: Good Character in Sentencing Submission
Date: Saturday, 6 July 2024 5:37:59 PM

Good afternoon,

I write to you as a victim survivor, and request if possible that my personal details including my name be kept confidential if my submission is used or published.

I would like to raise that as a child victim, I was one of the few whose perpetrator did end up in court. In my case the perpetrator was my step father, and I suffered violence and abuse for many years that I have not come to terms with and cannot bear to detail, so forgive me if some of this submission is in first person and some not.

When he was charged, I was 14 years old, and had enough agency to go to the police by myself. My step father had no other prior convictions, despite my siblings and I already having endured 8 years of hell. Unfortunately, the trial became yet another opportunity for me to be abused and victimised, as my mother took the side of my step father and supported him throughout the process, testifying to his good character. Meanwhile I had to live away from home. In a bad stereotype I lived in a sharehouse with a drug dealer, where I faced danger but nothing compared to what I had been living with. While convicted of the incident my stepfather was before the court for, there was no punishment, and faced with homelessness when my mother would no longer pay my share of the rent, I ended up back under his roof again for several more years of abuse. The fact that anybody was allowed to speak to his good character after what had been happening for years was a devastating betrayal by my mother and by the legal system.

I'd like to submit that people can lie in character references or when testifying to somebody's good character, and I believe these references should have no bearing on the judgement of a person's crime. These references do nothing to speak to the convicted's impact on their victim, or the severity of their crime. I see these references only as a way for the community and the court to dismiss a victim's suffering, almost as a "yeah, but" answer to a person's violent crimes.

Additionally, it's incredibly painful and invalidates the experience of a victim to hear what a great person somebody is, when they have broken the law and potentially damaged the victim for life.

It is my hope that character references for crimes of a violent or sexual nature are done away completely.

Thank you for accepting submissions on the topic.

Sincerely,