



Victim Support Scotland **Helping people affected by crime**

19 January 2024

Humza Yousaf MSP

First Minister

humza.yousaf.msp@parliament.scot

Angela Constance MSP

Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs

angela.constance.msp@parliament.scot

Open letter regarding anonymity from families as part of Victim Support Scotland's Support for Families Bereaved by Crime (SFBC) Service

Dear Humza Yousaf and Angela Constance,

We are calling on the Scottish Government to take action to safeguard surviving brothers and sisters from the significant and negative media attention following the death of a child or young person as a result of crime.

We are all families who have experienced the loss of a loved one as a result of a crime, so we know only too well how unimaginably traumatising this is. We have come together as a group, supported by Victim Support Scotland's Support for Families Bereaved by Crime service, to show our support for other families who have been forever scarred, not only by what has happened but by the impact of press and social media coverage about their loved ones.

We all firmly believe that victims under the age of 18 who die as a result of crime should be given the same rights and protections as a living victim under the age of 18 who is the victim of another crime, for example sexual abuse or assault.

Currently in Scotland, the victim's name, photograph, and extremely sensitive details about them and the crime that was committed against them are usually released in the public domain. This causes huge distress and adds to an already deeply traumatic situation.

Surviving siblings have a right to a childhood. They have a right to a private, family life.

We are calling on the Scottish Government to do better by affording an automatic right to anonymity to children and young people who die as a result of a crime so that their surviving siblings can live their lives free of unnecessary intrusion.

We feel that, as the current legislation in Scotland gives anonymity to perpetrators in Scotland who are under the age of 18, we are not asking too much.

Why should victims not be given the same right when they are killed as a result of a crime?

We are particularly concerned about the graphic and distressing information available online that children and young people have access to. Given the horrific nature of death as a result of crime, we implore the Scottish Government to do everything within their power to protect surviving siblings and their families from the constant volume of information and detail in the public domain.

The current Children (Care and Justice) and Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform Bills both include a section on anonymity and an opportunity to strengthen current laws.

We support Victim Support Scotland in calling for three specific changes:

1. Extend the current legislation regarding anonymity to include children who have died as a result of crime, to protect the victim's brothers and sisters where they are also children.
2. Extend the current legislation so that content already available that identifies a child who has died as a result of crime can be removed.
3. Provide a way families can choose to waive their right to anonymity if they later decide to name their loved one.

We all speak from experience of a family member who has died as a result of crime. We have all experienced media onslaught and intrusion sustained over a number of years. We have all experienced intimate and personal details about our family members shared all throughout newspaper and social media. Many of us have had to request that content is removed from the internet, and have news articles corrected.

We do not think it is right that children who lose their life due to crime, also lose all their right to anonymity.

We are in an age where true crime is growing significantly, where self-published videos on platforms such as YouTube and TikTok appear daily. For some families, a simple Google search brings up hundreds of thousands of search returns with unnecessary detail – equally searchable and findable by the surviving siblings, or their friends and classmates.

We urge the Scottish Government to do the right thing, to take action and to lead the way in support of people affected by crime. It is what we need, and it is what we deserve.

Head Office

15-23 Hardwell Close, Edinburgh, EH8 9RX info@victimssupportsco.org.uk

Victim Support Scotland is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered in Scotland
SC002138 President HRH The Princess Royal

1. Ex-partner of
Victim of homicide
2021
2. Daughter of
Victim of homicide
2021
3. Sister of
Victim of homicide
2023
4. Partner of
Victim of homicide
2022
5. Sister of
Victim of homicide
2022
6. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2018
7. Stepfather of
Victim of homicide
2018
8. Uncle of
Victim of homicide
2018
9. Aunt of
Victim of homicide
2018
10. Niece of
Victim of homicide
2019
11. Grandmother of
Victim of homicide
2018
12. Uncle of
Victim of homicide
2018
13. Sister of
Victim of homicide
2018
14. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2022
15. Partner of
Victim of homicide
2022
16. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2022
17. Father of
Victim of homicide
2023
18. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2023
19. Wife of
Victim of homicide
2004
20. Daughter of
Victim of homicide
2021
21. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2023
22. Sister of
Victim of homicide
2023
23. Father of
Victim of homicide
2023
24. Sister of
Victim of homicide
2023
25. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2022
26. Father of
Victim of homicide
2022
27. Sister of
Victim of homicide
2022
28. Sister of
Victim of homicide
2022
29. Aunt of
Victim of homicide
2022
30. Ex-partner of
Victim of homicide
2021
31. Stepmother of
Victim of homicide
2021
32. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2020
33. Wife of
Victim of homicide
2022
34. Sister of
Victim of homicide
2006
35. Stepdaughter of
Victim of homicide
2023
36. Wife of
Victim of homicide
2023
37. Son-in-law of
Victim of homicide
2023
38. Partner of
Victim of homicide
2021
39. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2021
40. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2022

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|---|---|---|---|
| 41. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2023 | 42. Stepfather of
Victim of homicide
2023 | 43. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2021 | 44. Father of
Victim of homicide
2021 |
| 45. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2023 | 46. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2021 | 47. Niece of
Victim of homicide
2023 | 48. Father of
Victim of homicide
2018 |
| 49. Cousin of
Victim of homicide
2023 | 50. Sister of
Victim of homicide
2020 | 51. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2020 | 52. Sister of
Victim of homicide
2021 |
| 53. Sister of
Victim of homicide
2021 | 54. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2021 | 55. Father of
Victim of homicide
2021 | 56. Stepdad of
Victim of homicide
2020 |
| 57. Partner's father of
Victim of homicide
2022 | 58. Partner's mother of
Victim of homicide
2022 | 59. Mother of
Victim of homicide
2022 | 60. Sister of
Victim of homicide
2022 |
| 61. Partner of
Victim of homicide
2019 | 62. Ex-partner of
Victim of homicide
2020 | 63. Daughter of
Victim of homicide
1994 | 64. Brother-in-law of
Victim of homicide
2020 |
| 65. Son of
Victim of homicide
2022 | | | |