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Dear Convener

## CONSULTATION ON THE MINIMUM AGE OF MARRIAGE AND COHABITANTS RIGHTS

I am writing to inform you that the Scottish Government has decided to consult on the minimum age of marriage and civil partnership, on matters related to the financial rights of cohabitants where a relationship ends in separation or death, and on two other matters relating to family law which would require secondary legislation to implement. There is further information on the anticipated scope of the consultation in this Government Initiated Question: [Written question and answer: S6W-23651 | Scottish Parliament Website](#).

We are aiming to issue the consultation by summer 2024. We want to explore whether we should bring forward legislation to raise the age of marriage and civil partnership from 16 to 18 and extend the criminal law on forced marriage and civil partnership to include conduct for the purpose of causing a child to marry.

We have already [welcomed](#) the Scottish Law Commission's recommendations and draft Bill on cohabitants' financial rights on separation, however, we want to consult further before we bring forward any legislation. During the progress of the Trusts and Succession (Scotland) Bill, stakeholders have raised concerns about the current arrangements for a cohabitant to seek financial provision where their partner dies without a will, so we will also inquire into this related area.

I look forward to engaging with you further as this work progresses.

## SIOBHIAN BROWN

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