



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



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SPICe Briefing
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Dog theft (photo reference investigation JT)

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Stage 3 proceedings for the Dog Theft (Scotland) Bill are due to take place on 16 December 2025. This briefing outlines the main issues considered during Stages 1 and 2.



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SB 25-60

Contents

Summary	3
Introduction	4
Heading 2	5
Heading 3	6

Summary

The [Dog Theft \(Scotland\) Bill](#) ("the Bill") was introduced by the Member, Maurice Golden MSP, as he believed a stand-alone offence of dog theft was required to address the low level of prosecutions and to enable the emotional impact of dog theft on owners to be fully taken into account.

Section 1 creates a new stand-alone offence of dog theft. No amendments to this section were agreed to at Stage 2.

Section 2 introduces an aggravation to the offence of dog theft where the dog is an assistance dog.

Amendments agreed to at Stage 2 included:

- replacing the label "assistance dog" with the broader expression "helper dog", and enabling Scottish Ministers to extend the definition of a "helper dog" through regulations.

Section 3 allows a victim of dog theft to make a victim statement about the effect of the crime on them to the court. This section was removed by an amendment at Stage 2.

Section 4 requires the Scottish Ministers to report annually on the operation of the Act.

Amendments agreed to at Stage 2 included:

- changing the annual reporting requirement on the Scottish Ministers to a one-off reporting requirement after three years
- reducing the information to be included in this report to only cover the numbers of cases, prosecutions and convictions.

Section 5 requires the Scottish Ministers to review the Act five years after it comes into force. This section was removed by an amendment at Stage 2.

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Introduction

- IntroductionThe Dog Theft (Scotland) Bill was introduced on 17 February 2025. The [Policy Memorandum](#), [Explanatory Notes](#), [Financial Memorandum](#) and [Delegated Powers Memorandum](#) were published alongside the Bill. The [SPICe briefing](#) on the Bill provides detailed consideration of its provisions and policy context. Three Stage 1 evidence sessions took place between 26 March and 21 May 2025. The [Stage 1 report](#) was published on 2 July 2025 and the [Stage 1 debate](#) took place on 2 October 2025. Stage 2 scrutiny took place at a [meeting of the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee](#) on 5 November 2025. Stage 3 proceedings (final consideration) are scheduled to take place on 16 December 2025.

Heading 2

Heading 3



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