



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Petitioning the Scottish Parliament: Making your voice heard

This short question and answer leaflet explains how the Scottish Parliament's public petitions process works and how you can make your voice heard.



What is a petition?

A petition is a way for you to raise an issue with your Parliament. It is a request for action which sets out what you want the Parliament to do and why.



Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing talks to petitioner Tina McGeever at a committee meeting.

Front cover image: Ryan McLaughlin who petitioned the Scottish Parliament on vitamin D supplementation

Ok, but can anyone petition?

Pretty much yes. Did you know that –

- you only need 1 signature to lodge your petition
- MSPs (Members of the Scottish Parliament) cannot lodge petitions
- there is no age limit
- petitions can be submitted in any language (e.g. British Sign Language, Braille). The Parliament can arrange for a translation or interpreting.

“

The ability of common folk to bring their concerns to the Parliament through the petitions system is democracy in action. You aren't always going to get what you want but at least the Scottish Parliament has to look at your petition.
(interviewee when asked what they thought about the petitions process)

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Great! But what can I petition the Scottish Parliament about?

Well, first of all, the petition should relate to an issue that is within the Scottish Parliament's responsibility. These are known as devolved issues and a list of these is given below –

- agriculture, forestry and fishing
- education and lifelong learning
- environment and climate change
- enterprise
- Gaelic
- health
- housing
- law and home affairs
- local government
- natural and built heritage
- planning
- police and fire services
- social work
- sport and the arts
- statistics and public records
- tourism and economic development
- transport and infrastructure

Next, you need to think about whether the issue you want to raise is actually something the Parliament can do something about. Petitions should be relevant at a national level, not just a personal or local matter. If the petition relates to a more local matter, maybe a school closure, then that could be taken up at a local level (with your council perhaps).



Dyce Academy pupils talk about their petition on Fairtrade food in schools.

Sounds a bit complicated!?

It isn't! There are staff in the Parliament whose job it is to assist petitioners, give advice about the process and how to word the petition itself. There is also an easy to complete template for submitting your petition. If you want advice, see the contact details on page 6.

The petitions system was really simple and easy to use.

(Fraserburgh Academy pupil Mark Buchan)

Right, so I send in my petition, what happens next?

Well, the Public Petitions Committee (PPC) is made up of 7 MSPs and its role is to consider every admissible petition lodged with the Parliament. So if your petition is admissible it will be looked at by the committee. The committee might invite you to come to a formal meeting to discuss your petition in person.

Once the PPC has considered the petition it decides what to do next. On most occasions it will write to the Scottish Government and other bodies such as local councils, health boards, police forces, etc (depending on what the petition deals with). The committee will decide the most appropriate bodies to contact and write to them with a series of questions relating to your petition. When the responses come in they are sent to you asking for your comments. You have the opportunity to say what you think. Then the petition and all the written responses go back before the committee. The committee will keep bringing the petition back to consider progress and what further action to take.

The Public Petitions Committee in action



Fine, but does petitioning lead to anything?

I thought the petitions process was really valuable and I would recommend everyone to do it.

(Berwickshire High School pupil Janie Orr)

Yes it does. Petitions have brought about changes in the law, in government policy, the production of revised guidelines on an issue, a change in a decision. Even just raising awareness of the issue in the Parliament can be a success.

David Stewart MSP, Convener of the Public Petitions Committee, speaking at a conference.



John Muir, who submitted a petition on tackling knife crime





Where do I find out more?

For more information about petitioning the Scottish Parliament, why not visit our website? From here you can access information about –


- lodging a petition
- tracking current petitions
- closed petitions
- the work of the Public Petitions Committee

You can access further information about petitioning the Scottish Parliament at –
www.scottish.parliament.uk/petitions

 **Address** The Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

 **Telephone** 0131 348 5254

Text Relay 18001 0131 348 5254

 **Email** petitions@scottish.parliament.uk

Why not visit the Scottish Parliament website for more information about your Parliament and how it works? – www.scottish.parliament.uk

I felt backed up by the committee,
that someone was in my corner fighting
for me.

(Petitioner Lynn Merrifield)



Languages and formats

This leaflet is available in a range of formats including Braille, audio and large print. Please contact Public Information for copies.

Tha a' bhileag seo ri faighinn ann an grunn chruthan is chànanan. Cuir fios gu Seirbhis Fiosrachaidh a' Phobail airson lethbhreacan.

يرجى الاتصال بخدمة تقديم المعلومات للجمهور إن كنتم بحاجة إلى ترجمة أو إلى خدمات مترجم شفهي لتمكينكم من الانخراط والمشاركة في عمل مجلس النواب الاسكتلندي. يمكنكم الكتابة إلينا بأي لغة.

স্কটিশ পার্লামেন্টের কাজকর্মে শরীক হওয়ার জন্য আপনার অনুবাদের দরকার হলে বা একজন বাঙালী ইন্টারপ্রিটারের সাহায্য চাইলে দয়া করে পাবলিক ইনফর্মেশন (Public Information) এর সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন। তাছাড়া আপনি যে কোনো ভাষায় আমাদের কাছে চিঠি লিখতে পারেন।

Osoby chcące zaangażować się w działalność Parlamentu Szkockiego i pragnące otrzymać tłumaczenia dokumentów lub pomoc tłumacza ustnego, prosimy o kontakt z działem Public Information. Korespondencję można nadsyłać w dowolnym języku.

ਸਕਾਟਲੈਂਡ ਦੀ ਪਾਰਲੀਮੈਂਟ ਦੀ ਕਾਰਜਕਾਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਗ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਜਾਂ ਦੋਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਚਾਹੀਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਜਨਤਕ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ (Public Information) ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ। ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ।


如欲索取文件的中文翻譯本，或要求取得口譯員的協助，以參與蘇格蘭議會的工作，請聯絡供資訊部門 (Public Information)；用任何語文寫信給我們均可。


اسکاتش پارلیمنٹ کے کام میں حصہ لینے کے لیے اگر آپ کو ٹرانسلیشن (ترجمہ) یا انٹرپرائٹر (مترجم) کی خدمات درکار ہیں تو براہ مہربانی ہماری پبلک انفارمیشن (دفتر معلومات عامہ) سے رابطہ قائم کریں۔ آپ ہمیں کسی بھی زبان میں لکھ سکتے ہیں۔

Contact details

Public Information

Public Information can help you find out about the business, membership and procedures of the Scottish Parliament.

 **Address** Public Information
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

 **Telephone** 0800 092 7500
0131 348 5000


Fòn 0131 348 5395 (Gàidhlig)


Textphone users can contact us on
0800 092 7100. We also welcome calls using
the Text Relay service.

 **Text** 07786 209 888
 **Email** sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk
 **Website** www.scottish.parliament.uk
 **Twitter** twitter.com/ScotParl

Visitor Services

Visitor Services can help you book tickets,
arrange a guided tour or a group visit.

 **Address** Visitor Services
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

 **Telephone** 0800 092 7600
0131 348 5200

Textphone users can contact us on
0800 092 7100. We also welcome calls using
the Text Relay service.

 **Email** sp.bookings@scottish.parliament.uk
 **Website** www.scottish.parliament.uk

To book a place in the crèche, please phone
0131 348 6192 or email
creche@scottish.parliament.uk