

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE Newsletter



June 2013, Issue 1

Introduction

This newsletter outlines the current work of the Public Petitions Committee and describes what the role of the Committee is. It goes on to outline the new online petitions system and explains how it can be used.

The newsletter is aimed at informing MSPs, MPs in Scotland and staff about the work of the Committee and it will be issued on a quarterly basis.

Online petitions system

Petitions can be submitted to

the committee using the Parliament's new online petitions system. By creating an account and completing the online template petitioners can submit their proposal to the clerks. The system has a facility to host petitions and gather signatures. The system also enables people to leave comments and views.

Further information on the online petitions system can be found here:

<http://scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/Index.aspx>

Inquiry into child sexual exploitation

The committee launched its inquiry into child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Scotland on 6 March 2013. The inquiry relates to a petition by Barnardo's Scotland ([PE1393](#)).

The committee issued an initial call for evidence seeking views from support organisations for vulnerable or excluded young people. A second tranche of evidence gathering was also undertaken from some statutory bodies. The written submissions are currently being analysed and oral evidence sessions are underway.

Further information about the inquiry can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/60242.aspx>

Upcoming events and meetings

June 2013

25th Committee meeting

July / August 2013

Summer recess

Petitions gathering signatures

The latest petitions that were collecting signatures in June include:

Religious observance in schools by Mark Gordon and Secular Scotland ([PE1487](#))

Alzheimer's and dementia awareness by Amanda Kopel, on behalf of The Frank Kopel Alzheimer's Awareness Campaign ([PE1480](#))

Isolation in single room hospitals by Dr John Womersley and Reverend Douglas Irving ([PE1482](#))

Primary one class sizes and sibling placing requests by Julie Wales ([PE1486](#))



New petitions lodged

In May / June the committee considered a number of new petitions.

On **14 May** the committee heard from David Milne and Councillor Paul Johnston, Aberdeenshire Council on the governance and propriety during the Menie Development ([PE1474](#)).

John Nelson, on behalf of Hamilton Labour Party, on bus fares and services ([PE1475](#)).

On **28 May** the committee heard from Murray Cooper on the A90 Balmedie to Tipperty dualling project ([PE1478](#)).

Andrew Muir on complaints about solicitors ([PE1479](#)).

On **11 June** the committee heard from the Throat Cancer Foundation on gender neutral HPV vaccination ([PE1477](#)).

Unite, GMB and UCATT on blacklisting in Scotland ([1481](#)).

Petitions under current consideration

The committee is currently considering a number of petitions including:

Scotland's national tree by Alex Hamilton, which seeks to proclaim the Scots Pine as the National Tree of Scotland ([PE1457](#)).

Effective thyroid and adrenal testing, diagnosis and treatment by Sandra Whyte, Marian Dyer and Lorraine Cleaver ([PE1463](#)).

Scottish living wage recognition scheme by Andrew McGowan, on behalf of the Scottish Youth Parliament, which seeks to set up a scheme to recognise employers that pay a Scottish living wage ([PE1467](#)).



What can the Committee do?

The Public Petitions Committee is dedicated to considering admissible petitions. New petitions are normally considered at each meeting as well as a number of current petitions. Should the Committee consider it necessary it may invite a petitioner to give oral evidence.

Petitions should raise issues which relate to matters within the Scottish Parliament's responsibility, in general these will be devolved matters. Petitions should be relevant at a national level and not just a personal or local matter. The Committee has no remit to intervene in the operational decisions or actions of public bodies such as local authorities and health boards. While the Committee cannot become directly involved in such matters it can, for example, ask the Scottish Government to review the wider national policies and / or guidance.

The Committee may not adjudicate on personal or commercial interests and is unable to consider petitions that bear on matters currently being determined by the courts or which are potentially defamatory. Only one signature is required to lodge a petition. Advice on admissibility can be obtained from the clerks and further guidance accessed at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/29869.aspx>

For all meetings on a Tuesday papers are issued the previous Thursday.



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