



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01752

Name of petitioner

Bill Alexander

Petition title

Workforce management and time recording systems in the Scottish Government

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to introduce suitable workforce management and time recording systems to monitor the work activities of civil servants, to ensure that reasonable standards of efficiency and value for money are being met.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I have written to the Scottish Government and Audit Scotland.

Petition background information

Based upon responses to freedom information requests, it would appear that the Scottish Government and its associated departments have no management or time recording systems in place that:

Set work timescales for officials that can be used to monitor the progress by civil servants in order to ensure that reasonable standards of efficiency and value for money are being met.

In effect, this would appear to suggest that there is simply no accurate control over how long a task will take. If no plans are set out and monitored, then no one actually knows if the work being undertaken is carried out in an efficient manner or not.

In addition, if there are no management and time recording systems in place, then it does beg the question as to how Audit Scotland can evaluate the use of public money when it comes to the work being carried out by civil servants. I have written to Audit Scotland and cannot get a clear answer to this question.

Audit Scotland do have what appears to be a very good management system that it uses to ensure it is efficient. However, it is my view that it does not appear to be concerned about the lack of similar systems within the Scottish Government (i.e. a public body it is responsible for auditing).

It is difficult to understand how any accurate evaluation of efficiency or productivity by

the Scottish Government can ever be made, if there is no data that would allow for any form of accurate measurement of how long the different tasks take.

There is another factor that should also be considered, and it is the potential cost implications for other parties, be they government or private, as a result of any disruption or delay.

Not all public departments are free from meeting timescales. Radiotherapists when providing cancer treatment are monitored in 6-minute intervals, and doctors are allocated 10 minutes for each patient. It does seem to be a strange priority to strictly control the time available for vital health care, but not to apply this same process for all other tasks.

A possible example of the very real impact that the lack of proper management systems can have, is in the implementation of Scottish Government policy made in 2009 with regard to ensuring 30-day payment for the supply chain in all government funded work. This is a really good idea which has never been fully implemented or audited in Scottish Government funded construction projects. In 2012 it was also decided to adopt this policy for local authorities. To date the policy appears to have been abandoned, although there has been no official announcement. Had there been adequate management systems in place, then you would expect that these failures to implement government policy could have been prevented.

The implications caused by the lack of proper management systems in the public sector are very serious, costly, and should be investigated by the parliament as a matter of urgency.

Unique web address

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01752>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

30 / 09 / 2019

Comments to stimulate online discussion

Do you agree that the introduction of suitable workforce management and time recording systems would provide assurances that the Scottish Government is using public funds effectively and that value for money is being achieved?