



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01834

Name of petitioner

Alistair Stephen

Petition title

Urgent funding for Citizens Advice Bureaux

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide urgent funding to Citizens Advice Scotland, to ensure that Citizens Advice Bureaux continue to provide services for local people across Scotland.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I have contacted local MSPs and the First Minister.

Petition background information

The first Scottish Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) was established in Glasgow in 1939, and the Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux became fully independent in 1980. The needs they met were many and varied during that period and expanded post war to encompass many other needs of Scottish Citizens. They are a familiar name that people regard as part of their daily life and a place to seek help with issues.

Funding cuts means that a number of offices are now facing closure. These offices serve the most deprived areas of the country and are a lifeline to the people in those communities when it comes to matters relating to benefit entitlements including Universal Credit, Housing, etc. The particular difficulties in relation to Universal Credit are around the fact that many of those applying have no means of accessing the online application process.

Many applicants do not have English as their first language and CAB offices have experience in obtaining advice via interpreters. "Outreach Clinics", centred in local area Jobcentres are also a feature of the CAB service and enable Jobcentre staff to refer clients directly to a CAB Advisor based there for a day.

With the furlough scheme about to end, the workload on CAB offices will increase exponentially as thousands more may be made redundant, find they have no income of any kind and turn to CAB for advice. This will undoubtedly affect the vulnerable in our society immediately, with the consequences extending much more widely soon after. The effects of the Covid19 pandemic are severe enough in themselves without the

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are severe enough in themselves without the additional life changing effects of furlough ending and, shortly after, the real effects of Brexit.

In cities such as Glasgow, the closure of offices would mean that many claimants from those areas could find it impossible to travel to other parts of the city and, in any case, with an already growing list of applicants, those offices would soon be overwhelmed if they are not already. Several members of CAB staff have already been made redundant. I believe that more may follow, without funding.

In Glasgow alone, five offices face closure, although it is estimated that in excess of 12,000 people in Glasgow sought advice from these offices in the last year alone. I believe that this figure will increase significantly at the end of October, with the end of the furlough scheme.

This petition therefore asks the Scottish Government to provide urgent funding for CAB offices in Scotland where budgets are being cut or closure is threatened.

Unique web address

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

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

09 / 12 / 2020

Comments to stimulate online discussion

Citizens Advice Bureaux serve all Scottish people and are of vital importance to the most disadvantaged.

Do you agree that they should be funded to ensure people can get the help and support that they need?