

## Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

**Petition Number:** [PE1711](#)

**Main Petitioner:** Stuart Callison on behalf of St Andrew's First Aid

**Subject:** First Aid Training for All Primary School Children in Scotland

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to:

1. Ensure that all primary schools in Scotland incorporate basic first aid as an integral part of their curriculum; and
2. Provide funding in order to develop high quality teaching materials on what to do in common emergencies, as well as to establish training and support for teachers to enable them to deliver these skills during short, interactive first aid workshops.

### Background

The petitioner asks that the Scottish Government ensure that First Aid is part of the curriculum in primary schools. There is almost no statutory curriculum in Scotland. The exceptions are that Gaelic must be taught in Gaelic speaking areas (Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (s1(5)(a) iii) and religious instruction will normally be expected to be provided (Education (Scotland) Act 1980 s8(i)).

While the curriculum is not based upon legislation and is intended to allow for autonomy at classroom, school and local authority levels, the Scottish Government provides the overall policy framework for Scottish education.

The Curriculum for Excellence (“CfE”) is a “framework of national expectations” and provides teachers “scope and space for professional decisions about what and how they should teach”.<sup>1</sup> Health and Wellbeing is one of the eight “Curriculum Areas”. In August 2016, the then Chief Inspector of Education and Chief Executive of Education Scotland, Dr Bill Maxwell, published [A Statement for Practitioners](#) which identified a key focus of CfE as “ensuring the best possible progression ... in health and wellbeing for every child and young person”.

Education Scotland has worked with [Save a life for Scotland](#) and [published a learning resource](#) “to support the teaching of CPR across all ages and stages”.

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<sup>1</sup> Building the Curriculum 1 (p1)

Teachers in Scotland are required to register with the General Teaching Council Scotland. Teachers must have completed initial teacher education (e.g. a BEd or PGDE or equivalent) and engage in professional learning through their careers.

Continuing professional development (“CPD”) can be provided from a number of sources. In practice, the local authority as the employer provides or funds much of teachers’ continuing professional development. Professional development may take place during in-service days. The local authority may need to provide cover should a teacher take part in CPD during term time.

The Scottish Government has agreed to fund CPD in other areas. For example, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced on 8 November 2018 that the Government would fund “LGBTI training that is accessible to all teachers and school staff in Scotland” as part of a package of measures to support all state schools to teach LGBTI equality and inclusion.<sup>2</sup>

### **Scottish Government Action**

St Andrew’s First Aid raised this issue in November 2016. [A BBC report](#) quoted a Scottish Government spokesperson who said—

"We recognise how important it is that children and young people are able to positively engage with health and wellbeing issues at school. Being trained in first aid can help young people develop the skills they may need in an emergency situation. Under Curriculum for Excellence, schools already have the flexibility to provide first aid training. It is up to individual schools and local authorities to decide if, and how best, to deliver this."

The Scottish Government published [Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest: A Strategy for Scotland](#) in 2015 which is a “5 year plan with the aim of [saving] an additional 1,000 lives by 2020”. The Strategy highlighted experience from Denmark where an increase in the rates of bystanders giving CPR “was achieved after a range of measures including mandatory resuscitation training in schools” (p12). The Strategy aims for an improved public response to incidents of cardiac arrests and includes the ambition that “training in the use of CPR is more readily available through schools, work places and voluntary groups.” (p21)

Education Scotland has worked with [Save a life for Scotland](#) and [published a learning resource](#) “to support the teaching of CPR across all ages and stages”.

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<sup>2</sup> Scottish Parliament, [Official Report 8 November 2018](#) (Col. 56)

## **Scottish Parliament Action**

[On 27 November 2013, The Scottish Parliament held a Members' Business](#) debate on a motion lodged by James Dornan MSP which congratulated St Andrew's First Aid on its campaign, "First Aid? Count Me In".

Another [Members' Business debate took place on 30 January 2018](#) on a motion lodged by Johann Lamont MSP. The motion also referenced St Andrew's First Aid and highlighted its work which showed that there is a shortage of first aid skills in areas of deprivation.

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**12 November 2018**

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