

Public Petitions Committee
Determination on proper form of petitions

To be read alongside the Parliament's rules on public petitions, the Public Petitions Committee has made the following determination under Rule 15.4.3 on proper form of petitions.

- Petitions should be submitted using the Scottish Parliament's online petitions site. All sections should be completed.
- If an individual has no access to or difficulty in using the online petitions site, or if the site is unavailable, a petition may be submitted in paper form using the word template.
- A petition may be brought in any language. Where a language other than English is used, the Parliament will provide a translation.
- Petitions should be brief and state clearly what action is being sought.
- No supplementary information (such as correspondence, legal information, photographs, or copies of Freedom of Information requests) will be accepted as part of a petition.
- Petitions must relate to national policy or practice as opposed to a local or individual matter.
- Petition titles should be a short factual description that explains what is sought but not a slogan or campaign name. For example, "changes to the law about fatal accident inquiries" would be an appropriate title. "Betty's Law" or "Justice for Betty" would not be.
- Previous action taken on a petition must include raising the issue with a relevant decision maker such as the Scottish Government (or other relevant public body) or an elected representative such as an MSP.
- A petition will not be considered by the Public Petitions Committee if the same (or substantially similar) petition, submitted by the same petitioner, has previously been considered by the Committee and closed at its first consideration on three consecutive occasions.
- Petitions should not:
 - Name individuals or otherwise contain information that could lead to the identification of any individual. This excludes elected representatives and senior managers of public bodies.
 - Contain any false statements. It is the responsibility of the petitioner to ensure that statements are accurate.
 - Refer to any matter that is the subject of continuing court proceedings.
 - Seek an adjudication or decision on an individual or commercial matter.
 - Seek to involve the Public Petitions Committee in a decision that is more properly the domain of another body (for example complaints, court appeals, planning appeals, local authority expenditure decisions etc.)
 - Include language or wording that is defamatory, offensive, or inappropriate, for example swear words, insults, sarcasm or other language that could reasonably be considered offensive by a reader.