

**PE1493/H**

UNISON Scotland Email of 20 December 2013

**Scottish Parliament Public Petition PE1493 on a Sunshine Act for Scotland**

Dear Andrew

Thank you for the invitation to outline our views on the above petition.

UNISON Scotland has not had an opportunity to take a formal position on this issue. However, our general approach is support transparency in public affairs, subject to certain privacy exceptions around personal data.

It could be argued that the measure proposed is unnecessary because we already have statutory provisions in the Bribery Act and requirements that are incorporated into the contract of employment, such as *NHS Circular MEL (1994) 48* 'Standards of Business Conduct for NHS Staff'. Some health boards have additional rules and registers.

While these rules may address the issue in principle, I appreciate that they do not create the level of transparency that the petitioner is seeking. There is a widespread belief that drug companies in particular use incentives to promote their products and therefore we understand that greater transparency may be appropriate.

While the petitioner's main target appears to be medical staff, the Committee should be aware that this is increasingly becoming an issue for nurses. The provisions would also incorporate a range of A&C staffs, not least in facilities management. There would also be a need for an administrative system and there would be workload considerations for a range of staff. The committee may therefore wish to consider if the cost and effort involved is proportionate to the perceived problem.

If such a system was to be introduced we would argue for some restrictions, compatible with the current rules, on de-minimis levels. This would ensure low cost promotional materials like pens, diaries and clipboards etc don't clutter up the register and create unnecessary work.

I hope the above is helpful.

Dave Watson  
Scottish Organiser  
(Bargaining & Campaigns)