

# Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition [PE1990](#): Introduce a Scottish Parliament question session for young people

## Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

- The Petition calls on the Scottish Parliament to “urge the Scottish Government to request the introduction of a monthly chamber session to allow young people to put questions to the First Minister and her cabinet.”
- The Scottish Youth Parliament established in 1999 is the “democratically elected voice of Scotland’s young people”<sup>1</sup>, representing those aged 14-25.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the basis for the Scottish Youth Parliament’s vision, mission and values.
- A [Working in Partnership agreement](#) between the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament is in place. This is one of the ways that the Scottish Parliament is promoting young people being involved in the democratic process.
- The most recent agreement was signed by the Presiding Officer, Alison Johnstone MSP, and then Chair of the Scottish Youth Parliament, Josh Kennedy MSYP, in December 2021. [A podcast on the agreement is available](#) on the Scottish Parliament website. [A previous working agreement](#) was signed in 2018.
- The Working in Partnership agreement includes:
  - the Scottish Parliament hosting a sitting of the Scottish Youth Parliament once every two years;
  - developing relationships between MSPs and MSYPs;
  - ensuring young people can contribute to committee inquiries; and
  - providing opportunities for staff from both Parliaments to work collaboratively.
- MSYPs have provided evidence to Scottish Parliament committees on a number of issues as well as working in innovative ways together with Scottish Parliament Committees. [The Scottish Parliament’s Local Government and Communities Committee, for example, attended the Scottish Youth Parliament workshop on period products which was held at Dunfermline High School](#) during its consideration of the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill (now the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021).
- A Children’s Parliament was established in Scotland in 1996. The work of the Children’s Parliament “*supports the Scottish Government, local authorities*

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<sup>1</sup> [Scottish Youth Parliament](#)

*and other public bodies to fulfill their legal obligations to promote and protect the human rights of everyone and fulfill their duty of care toward children.”<sup>2</sup>*

- Since 2017 Scottish Government Ministers have met once a year with children and young people<sup>3</sup>. In addition, the Scottish Government’s Executive Team, chaired by Permanent Secretary, meets annually with the Children’s Parliament, and the Scottish Youth Parliament.
- In terms of deliberative democracy and engaging young people in deliberative processes, the Scottish Government has committed to a citizens’ assembly for under 16s and a Future Generations Commission. These were featured in its [2021-22 Programme for Government](#). The under 16s citizens’ assembly was also mentioned in the [Scottish Government’s response to the report of the Citizens’ Assembly of Scotland](#).
- The [Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland](#) works to protect the human rights of children and young people in Scotland.
- [The Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee is currently undertaking an inquiry into public participation](#) in the work of the Scottish Parliament. As part of this, a Citizen’s Panel was formed to answer the question “How can the Scottish Parliament ensure that diverse voices and communities from all parts of Scotland influence our work?”. [One of the Panel’s recommendations was](#) that the Scottish Parliament should “Schedule specific time in the debating Chamber for individual public questions to be asked.

## Scottish Parliament Action

- As above, a working in partnership agreement is in place between the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament.
- Formal proceedings of the Parliament are regulated by [Standing Orders](#) as provided for in the [Scotland Act 1998](#).

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30/01/2023

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<sup>2</sup> [Children’s Parliament Scotland](#)

<sup>3</sup> See [Scottish Youth Parliament Cabinet Takeover 2022](#), [Cabinet Takeover 2022](#), Children’s Parliament and [Key Messages](#) Annual Scottish Cabinet Meeting with Children and Young People 2022 [and Commitments agreed at annual Cabinet Meeting 2022](#).

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at [spice@parliament.scot](mailto:spice@parliament.scot). Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in petition briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Published by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe), an office of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP