

PE2048/U: Review the FAST stroke awareness campaign

Minister for Public Health and Women's Health written submission, 25 March 2025

Thank you for the response of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee (CPPPC) following its consideration of PE2048 at its meeting of 19 February.

I note in the discussion from the Official Report of the meeting, the concerns raised from the Committee's earlier meeting on the 5 February regarding the evidence heard and any change in messaging from FAST to BEFAST.

The Scottish Government does not currently plan to deviate from the use of FAST. It is the Scottish Government's position that there is still insufficient evidence to support replacing FAST with BE FAST. The National Clinical Guideline for Stroke states that "further evidence is required before the Working Party could recommend the use of other screening tools". This stance aligns with the positions of both Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland and the Stroke Association.

The Stroke Speciality Advisor to the Chief Medical Officer has also liaised with their counterparts in the nations in the rest of the UK and Ireland and confirmed that there are currently no plans to adopt BE FAST in public awareness campaigns in these healthcare systems.

I thank NHS Ayrshire and Arran for providing the CPPPC with their submission of 22 November. Regarding any trial of BEFAST within NHS Ayrshire and Arran, I would reiterate, as I said in my letter of 12 November 2024, that the Scottish Government does not currently plan to run local trials of BEFAST in individual Health Boards. This would be a decision for an individual Board to make.

I hope this update is useful and thank you again for your correspondence

Yours sincerely,

Jenni Minto MSP