

## **Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition [PE2186: Review the Personal Footcare Guidance to ensure equity to access footcare services in rural and remote areas in Scotland](#), lodged by Maria Aitken on behalf of Caithness Health Action Team**

### **Brief overview of issues raised by the petition**

The petitioners are calling for a review of [Personal Footcare Guidance \(PFG\)](#) which, they believe, negatively impacts people in rural and remote areas more than in other areas because of the difficulties in accessing foot care and support with nail cutting etc. The petitioner argues that vulnerable people attempting to look after their own footcare are more at risk of falling or infection.

Personal footcare entails:

#### **Toenail care**

- Clipping and filing toenails safely and keeping them at a length which feels comfortable

#### **Skin care**

- Smoothing and moisturising dry and rough skin
- Keeping feet clean, dry, comfortable and warm
- Checking for cracks and breaks in the skin
- Looking for signs of infection or other obvious early problems and seeking professional advice

#### **Checking footwear**

- Checking footwear for comfort, fit, state of repair and safety

#### **Eligibility for personal footcare services**

If someone [is assessed by the local authority as requiring free personal care](#), then they are entitled to receive help with personal footcare free of charge. [The Community Care and Health \(Scotland\) Act 2002](#) and its 2018 amendment explicitly list toenail trimming as a personal care task that must not be charged for by local authorities.

[The Scottish Government has submitted a response to the petition](#), stating they have no intention to review the PFG, although it was 'refreshed' in March 2025. They state that it is up to health boards to decide how they deliver

specific services and how they ensure healthcare is safe, effective and person-centred and tailored to the needs of the local population and local priorities.

Since 2013 the consistent position of the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland is that 'Routine nail cutting and personal footcare are considered part of daily hygiene, not a clinical service provided by NHS podiatry. There has been no change in policy by the Scottish Government in relation to this.'

**Anne Jepson, SPICe**

**Senior Researcher**

22 October 2025

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)

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