

Public Petitions Committee

Written submission guidance

If you want to support a petition after it has stopped collecting signatures (when it is 'lodged'), or if you want to say what you think about a petition in more detail at any time, then you can send us your views in a "written submission". This guidance explains how to create a written submission.

Why the Committee wants to hear your views

You may have views or information you wish to share with the Committee about a petition and the action it is calling for. You don't have to be an expert to provide a written submission, although it helps if you have some knowledge of the issues being raised.

Providing a written submission helps the Public Petitions Committee understand—

- the issue(s) raised by a petition
- whether the petition is realistic (i.e. something that is possible to achieve)
- other work that might be progressing to address the issue(s) being raised

Written submission requirements

Before you send us your written submission, there are some things that it's important to be aware of, including what information we can and can't accept or publish.

Written submissions **must**—

- **Be about** the action called for in the petition.
- **Be concise** - a maximum of 800 words (approx. 2 sides A4, Arial 12 point)
- **Be accurate** - submissions must be factually accurate.

If you are a **petitioner**, please only send us a written submission **if**—

- You have new information to share.
- You would like to comment on new written submissions.
- You have been invited to by the Committee clerking team.

Written submissions **must not**—

- **Refer to a local, personal or individual matter.**
- **Name individuals** or otherwise contain information that could lead to the identification of any individual other than MSPs and/or senior leaders e.g. the Chief Executive of an organisation.
- **Include unsuitable 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.
- **Include copies of correspondence** with MSPs or bodies such as local authorities; photographs or Freedom or Information responses. This includes

copies of letters or e-mails between yourself and other people, or between third parties (e.g. an e-mail conversation between your MSP and an organisation). You can, however, summarise what these say in your written submission.

- **Include copies of legislation or statutory guidance** - please provide a link to these, rather than including the full text.
- **Include information that is protected by copyright.**
- **Refer to matters that are the subject of continuing court proceedings** – this includes cases that are currently being considered by the courts or are likely to be considered soon.
- **Provide links to external web-pages** where there is the ability to leave comments – e.g. news articles.

If your written submission does not comply with these requirements, we will ask you to re-submit your submission in line with this guidance.

What happens next?

When you send in a written submission, it won't appear on the petition's web-page straight away, as we need to check what you've written meets our guidelines.

If we can't publish a written submission for some reason, we will always let you know why and provide you with an opportunity to change what you've written.

If you are providing a written submission on behalf of an organisation, we will publish the submission in the name of that organisation.

If you are an individual, we will usually publish the written submissions under your own name. If you don't want us to publish your written submission under your name, we can sometimes publish it anonymously. To find out more, please contact the Public Petitions team via petitions@parliament.scot.

You can view details of the Parliament's [privacy notice on submitting your views to a committee](#) which explains how we will treat your submission.

When should I make a submission?

You can make a submission at any time. If you have been invited to make a submission by a particular date, please try to meet this deadline. Otherwise, it may be too late for us to share your views with the Committee and for your written submission to make a difference.

Where do I get more information?

If you're not sure where to start, we've provided a written submission template to help you structure your submission.

If you have any other questions about sending in a written submission, including how you can do so in another format (e.g. large print), please contact the Public Petitions team on petitions@parliament.scot or 0131 348 5254.