



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

2nd Meeting, 2021 (Session 5)

Wednesday 27 January 2021

Present:

Maurice Corry
Tom Mason
David Torrance

Johann Lamont (Convener)
Gail Ross (Deputy Convener)

The meeting opened at 9.30 am.

1. **Consideration of continued petitions:** The Committee considered the following continued petitions—

PE1319: Improving youth football in Scotland. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that the Committee has considered all aspects of the petition in significant detail over a period of 10 years covering several sessions of Parliament; the majority of actions in the petition have been considered and concluded in earlier sessions of the Parliament; the Scottish Government has committed to liaising directly with the petitioners as well as the Scottish FA and the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland on the outstanding issues when restrictions will allow; and the Scottish FA has confirmed that a working party has been established to review the registration rules in relation to 15, 16 and 17-year olds. The Committee also agreed to write to the Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing, the Scottish FA, the Convener of the Health and Sport Committee and the petitioners.

PE1637: Ship to ship oil transfers and trust port accountability. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that the licencing of ship-to-ship transfers is reserved to the UK Government and the Committee does not have a remit to intervene in relation to the specific application in the Cromarty Forth; and evidence provided to the Committee notes a low number of complaints against trust ports in Scotland and open engagement and dialogue exists with stakeholder groups, including the nine communities that border the

Cromarty Firth. The Committee also agreed to write to the Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands.

PE1683: Support for families with multiple births. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that the Scottish Government is implementing policies to support low income families, including those with multiples and has no plans to extend funded Early Learning and Childcare for children under 3 who are part of a multiple birth, based on this factor alone. The Committee also agreed to write to the Minister for Children and Young People.

PE1768: Children Hearing proceedings should be minuted and or recorded. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that a Record of Proceedings is kept for each Children's Hearing which notes why a hearing has been arranged, who is present and absent, as well as the decisions that are taken and the reasons for them, and that this record should be sufficiently detailed to make clear what has been decided, why a decision has been made, what information has been relied on, what outcomes the decision has been designed to bring about and what the child's views are and that these views have been taken into account; the Committee accepts that the full minuting or recording of every hearing would be disproportionate, resource intensive and have a negative impact on the meaningful participation of children and young people; and the work of the Children's Hearing system is kept under review by the Scottish Parliament.

PE1793: Alleviation of Water Poverty. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that the Scottish Government is working closely with Citizens Advice Scotland on affordability and responsible debt recovery methods, and as part of the Principles of Charging for 2021-27, the maximum discount under the existing water charges reduction scheme (WCRS) is increasing from 25% to 35% and the WCRS is being extended to include around 290,000 households that receive a 25% single person discount.

PE1801: Retain powers of economic and industrial intervention. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that the EU (Future Relationship) Bill has now been passed by the UK Parliament; and the Committee is confident that the issues raised by the petition will continue to be discussed by the Scottish Parliament.

PE1808: Remuneration of vital public service employees. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that large parts of the public sector, such as local government and the NHS are not directly covered by the Scottish Government's pay policy; and the work of the Fair Work in Social Care Group and the Independent Review of Adult Social Care will inform Scottish Government plans for longstanding, sustainable improvements to adult social care and to ensure that workers in care homes and the wider social care sector are better supported; and the Committee is confident that the issues raised by the petition will continue to be discussed by the Scottish Parliament.

PE1811: Independent sport ombudsman. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that the Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing has previously confirmed to the Committee that they are confident all Scottish Sporting Governing

Bodies, which are recognised by sportscotland and therefore receive public funding, have transparent policies and procedures in place to ensure that all members of the SGB and associated clubs are treated fairly and equally; and the not-for-profit and independent body, Sport Resolutions, already exists and provides a dispute resolution service for sport. The Committee also agreed to write to the Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing.

PE1812: Protect Scotland's remaining ancient, native and semi-native woodlands and woodland floors. The Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government.

PE1823: Full body scans to all neonates in Scotland. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that medical professional evidence states that full body scans for neonates would not be a good option given risks and other issues, and the UK National Screening Committee is responsible for advising the Scottish Government if it believes there to be sufficient evidence for introducing full body scans for neonates for AVM or other conditions not currently covered by the screening programme. The Committee also agreed to write to the Scottish Government and the petitioner.

PE1827: Support for first time buyers in areas with higher house inflation. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that the petitioner's proposals have been met regarding the deadline of the First Home Fund, which has been extended to March 2022, and as regards the petitioner's proposal to increase the help to buy threshold to £250,000, the Minister has explained the reasoning behind the current £200,000 threshold, and an evaluation of the scheme will be considered in 2021.

PE1828: Improve opportunities for employment. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that employability services delivered by local authorities, such as Routes to Work South, are funded by those local authorities. As a consequence, the services are only available to residents and there is no obligation on the local authority to widen scope; and nationally available employability support programmes are in place to support people of all ages. The Committee also agreed to write to the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills.

PE1829: Allow a designated visitor into intensive care wards. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that health boards have a range of guidance and support measures in place for visiting in hospitals, which is regularly reviewed; clinicians have the flexibility to apply their clinical judgement in the application of the guidance; and best practice across Health Boards is regularly shared through the Directors of Nursing and Person-Centred leads forum.

The meeting closed at 11.18 am.

PPC/S5/21/2/M

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