

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Wednesday 14 January 2026
1st Meeting, 2026 (Session 6)

PE1989: Increase defibrillators in public spaces and workplaces

Introduction

Petitioner Mary Montague

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to support the provision of defibrillators in public spaces and workplaces.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1989>

1. The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 7 May 2025. At that meeting, the Committee agreed to invite the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health to give evidence at a future meeting.
2. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
3. Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage.
4. Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing for this petition.
5. The Scottish Government gave its initial response to the petition on 13 December 2022.
6. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 617 signatures have been received on this petition.
7. At its meeting on 12 November 2025, the Committee took evidence on emergency cardiac and stroke care issues that have been raised in multiple petitions, including this petition.

Action

8. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
January 2026

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE1989: Increase defibrillators in public spaces and workplaces

Petitioner

Mary Montague

Date Lodged

16 November 2022

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to support the provision of defibrillators in public spaces and workplaces.

Previous action

I contacted Paul Sweeney MSP to ask about a Petition to widen access to Automated External Defibrillators (AED) and was advised of the Committee route.

Background information

Following the fatal cardiac arrest of a close family member in a large, local supermarket, my request for an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) was refused, despite my highlighting that all other large supermarkets locally provided these.

A bereaved family may be comforted to know that everything that could have been done to save the life of their loved one, was done. The effect on shop staff in such a fatality can be traumatic also.

Sudden cardiac arrest is the leading cause of death in adults over the age of 40. British Heart Foundation say that "Cardiac arrest is a critical medical emergency" and "Unless treated immediately, leads to death within minutes. With around 3,200 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests in Scotland each year, the survival rate is just 1 in 10". An AED increases survival rates but the provision of AEDs is random.

Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE1989 on 7 May 2025

The Convener: PE1989, lodged by Mary Montague, is the first of two petitions concerning defibrillator provision that the committee is considering this morning. I declare an interest in that Mary Montague is the provost of East Renfrewshire Council, which is the presiding local authority in which my Eastwood constituency sits. The petition calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to support the provision of defibrillators in public spaces and workplaces.

We last considered the petition on 30 October 2024, when we agreed to write to the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health. The minister's response highlights the Scottish Government's participation in the Save a Life for Scotland partnership and the increase in defibrillator deployment by the public in recent years. The minister also points to a number of relevant factors that go beyond the availability of defibrillators, such as optimal placement, accessibility of the equipment and bystander confidence to use defibrillators.

The committee pressed the minister on engagement with the United Kingdom Government regarding defibrillator provision through the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The Scottish Government's response explains that there is a lack of strong evidence for the effectiveness of legislation to mandate defibrillators in designated places and that, as such, the Scottish Government is focusing efforts on its established approach to improving survival rates.

The committee will recall that we were a bit concerned about the Scottish Government's response. Defibrillators are now being provided everywhere else in the United Kingdom. I think that I recall that a Barnett consequential had even been provided in respect of that. I cannot remember whether that is correct, but that is my vague recollection. Nonetheless, it appears that Scotland is taking a unique position by not progressing provision, and I do not think that the committee was entirely convinced by that approach. Do colleagues have suggestions for how we might proceed?

Fergus Ewing (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP): I agree with what you have said, convener. In her response, which I am looking at, the minister, Jenni Minto, said:

“there is currently a lack of strong evidence for the effectiveness of enacting legislation to mandate deployment of PAD”—

public access defibrillators—

“in designated places”

and

“it is unclear whether such legislation would be ... effective”,

which suggests that there could be some evidence—we do not know what it is. If there is a lack of clarity, the best way to proceed might be to call the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health to give evidence to the committee on the petition.

I do not wish to pre-empt any procedure; we will also consider the next petition, which is also about defibrillators.

The Convener: Are colleagues agreed? I think that the committee wants to bring the minister in to give evidence on this area, because we felt that we had received pretty compelling testimony, and there is now the example from elsewhere in the country. Scotland seems to be uniquely taking the view that we should not be providing defibrillators. I do not think that they are terribly complicated to utilise. There are one or two in my constituency, and the committee has heard from people whose lives have been saved by their provision. Therefore, I think that we will hold the petition open. Are we agreed?

Members *indicated agreement*.