

# Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

6th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Wednesday  
20 April 2022

PE1877: Provide body cameras for all  
frontline NHS staff

## Note by the Clerk

**Lodged on** 10 June 2021

**Petitioner** Alex Wallace

**Petition  
summary** Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to  
provide body cameras for all frontline NHS staff and paramedics in  
Scotland.

**Webpage** <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1877>

## Introduction

1. The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on [19 January 2022](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Ambulance Service and the Scottish Government.
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. The Committee has received new responses from the Scottish Ambulance Service and the Scottish Government which are set out in **Annexe C**.
4. Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the [petition's webpage](#).
5. Further background information about this petition can be found in the [SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.

6. The Scottish Government's initial position on this petition can be found on the [petition's webpage](#).

## Action

The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take on this petition.

**Clerk to the Committee**

## Annexe A

# PE1877: Provide body cameras for all frontline NHS staff

## Petitioner

Alex Wallace

## Date lodged

10 June 2021

## Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide body cameras for all frontline NHS staff and paramedics in Scotland.

## Previous action

I have contacted Bob Doris MSP who has advised he supports the action called for. I also submitted a similar petition a few years ago.

## Background information

Providing body cameras would protect NHS staff and are vital for their security. Frontline staff including paramedics are verbally and physically abused during working hours. Body cameras would be a deterrent to stop this abuse. All other emergency services have these cameras so why not the people that are saving lives.

I believe body cameras would also help staff in relation to data protection issues. Any recordings could help if the NHS is sued by patients or families. It could prove there has been no negligence, being beneficial for NHS lawyers and staff.

Most NHS staff want these body cameras as they believe it would give them a bit of security. There are cameras on houses, streets, in shops, in hospital wards and main hospital buildings. These can help in insurance claims, so why not on the people that are saving lives?

NHS England is going to provide body cameras to frontline staff including paramedics, NHS Scotland should follow.

## Annexe B

### Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE1877 on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022

**The Convener:** PE1877 was lodged by Alex Wallace. We considered the petition in September of last year. It calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide body cameras for all front-line NHS staff and paramedics in Scotland. Members should note that the Public Petitions Committee considered a similar petition from the same petitioner in session 5.

The committee wrote to stakeholders to seek their views. In its submission, the British Medical Association raised concerns about how the use of body cameras might affect confidentiality and patient trust and suggested that, if a patient thought that their remarks were being filmed, that could prevent them from seeking help or being honest about their situation.

The clerk's note that accompanies the petition sets out data that the Scottish Ambulance Service has provided on reports of physical or verbal abuse against its staff. In its submission, the service notes that it has recently considered and approved a limited trial of the use of body cameras and sets out a number of perceived benefits, including a potential reduction in staff absence due to assault, the provision of better quality footage that would support prosecutions and wider improvements to staff wellbeing.

I invite comments, starting with Paul Sweeney.

**Paul Sweeney (Glasgow) (Lab):** I noted the petitioner's requests and the feedback that we received. In particular, I noted that the Scottish Government said that it did not believe that the use of body cameras would necessarily be appropriate for all front-line clinical staff, given that the safety risks vary considerably across different job roles.

Obviously, there are also patient confidentiality issues. That concern has been reiterated by the BMA. Confidentiality, breach of trust, sensitivity, data protection—[Inaudible.]—wide. However, I think that there are certain instances in which the use of such devices might be appropriate and might be worth considering more thoroughly.

To that end, I propose that we write to the Scottish Ambulance Service to request more information on its trial of the use of body cameras and to ask when it expects the trial to conclude and how the findings from it will be utilised. I also propose that we write to the Scottish Government to ask what plans it has to review the findings of the Ambulance Service's trial and to scale up the use of the measure, should the trial prove to be successful and it be deemed appropriate for the use of body cameras to be tried out more widely.

**Alexander Stewart:** I see some merit in looking at the limited trial that the Ambulance Service is to carry out. As Mr Sweeney has indicated, there are risks to

do with confidentiality and so on, which might be too great, but I believe that there is merit in considering what comes out of the trial and how things might progress. Therefore, I am keen that we continue our consideration of the petition, and I am happy to support Paul Sweeney's recommendations.

**The Convener:** That being the case, although we note the BMA's submission, we are minded to keep the petition open and to write to the Scottish Ambulance Service and the Scottish Government in the terms suggested by Mr Sweeney and supported by Mr Stewart. Is that agreed?

*[Members indicated agreement.]*

## Annexe C

### Scottish Ambulance Service submission of 3 February 2022

#### PE1877/E - Provide body cameras for all frontline NHS staff

The operational evaluation of body worn video technology is currently in the scoping and planning phase. The extreme pressures being experienced across the whole healthcare system have hampered the speed of progress of this work to date.

The operational evaluation will seek to evaluate the technology and its use in some of the following ways:

- Ease of use and the effect the presence of the equipment has on the delivery of clinical care
- Staff acceptance and confidence of the equipment in terms of attitude towards wearing the technology
- Staff side / Union opinion of the technology
- Whether the presence of a body worn camera escalates, deescalates or has no effect on a situation
- The practicalities of data storage, system management and the governance required to support this across the Service

The timescale for the initial evaluation of collected data will be towards the end of quarter 3 of FY 2022/23. The results of this pilot trial will inform a wider discussion on the validity of body worn video technology in the Scottish Ambulance Service. In the case the evaluation is in favour of the technology, these results will inform a business case for funding consideration.

# Scottish Government submission of 24 February 2022

## PE1877/F - Provide body cameras for all frontline NHS staff

You have asked three questions to update the Citizen Participation and Public Committee after it considered the above petition at its meeting on 19 January 2022.

I have answered the questions asked below:

### **What plans the Scottish Government has in place to review the findings of the Scottish Ambulance Service's body camera trial;**

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic which has led to high staff absences and call demand the Scottish Ambulance Service has been unable progress the trial further. The Service will look to resume this trial as soon as practically possible.

### **Whether the Scottish Government will consider an expansion of the trial should it prove successful;**

The completion of the trial will allow for an evidence based evaluation on the real time use of body worn video technology in the Scottish Ambulance Service.

The Scottish Government engages regularly with Scottish Ambulance Service and can confirm that there has been no formal ask of the Scottish Government to fund wider roll-out of body worn video technology in Scotland, given that the trial pilot has not concluded.

There has been, to date, no appetite from the relevant trade unions to introduce body worn video technology for front line ambulance workers in Scotland.

**What funding the Scottish Government would make available to support any expansion.**

If the evaluation points to a positive cost/benefit analysis we would expect that the findings would inform a business case that the Service would submit to the Scottish Government for consideration. The Scottish Government would welcome these discussions and would seek to additionally draw from evidence collated by ambulance services in London and the North East of England who have taken similar steps.