PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE

1st Meeting, 2006 (Session 2)

Wednesday 18 January 2006

The Committee will consider the following current petitions—

PE504 Petition calling for the Scottish Parliament to take the necessary steps to stop convicted murderers or members of their families from profiting from their crimes by selling accounts of their crimes for publication.

PE808 Petition by Lilian Laws on, on behalf of the Scottish Council on Deafness, calling for the Scottish Executive to develop and establish a specialist inpatient mental health unit for deaf and deafblind people and to provide resources (e.g. training) for mainstream psychiatric services in the community to make them more accessible to deaf and deafblind people in Scotland.

PE764 Petition by Margaret Tait, on behalf of the Stoneybank Tenants and Residents Association, Musselburgh, calls on the Scottish Parliament to request the Post Office to consider sympathetically the needs and requirements of disabled and elderly persons who, in urban areas in Scotland, would be expected to walk substantial distances, sometimes in excess of 2 miles, as a result of possible closure of certain sub post offices.

PE842 Petition by Mrs F C Bowman calling in the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to review the use of chloramines disinfectant in the treatment of drinking water.

PE860 Petition by Marilyn de Blieck, on behalf of Ayrshire Voices, calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to develop a coherent national policy in relation to the teaching of singing and in particular to ensure adequate provision of vocal tuition for young people across Scotland.
PE798 Petition by Margaret Scott calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to resolve the current critical problems in the provision of wheelchairs and specialist seating services within the NHS by both an immediate increase in funding and through a review, which in consultation with users, will address minimum standards, the scope of equipment provided and the delivery of services.

PE859 Petition by Sheena Borthwick, calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to upgrade the Southern Section of the A77 between Ayr and Stranraer including providing passing places every six miles and developing a bypass at Maybole.

PE783 Petition by James Reynolds on behalf of the Scotsman newspaper, calling for the Scottish Parliament to support the establishment of the golden eagle as the national bird of Scotland.
Title of Petition:
Title of petition required Convicted murderers or members of their families profiting from their crimes by selling their account of their crimes for publication.

We the undersigned, declare that.....

We the undersigned declare that as the immediate families of innocent murdered victims, we have been left powerless under the Scottish Judicial System to stop the convicted murderer selling their account of their crimes for publication. We are also powerless to stop the convicted murderer from giving malicious or deliberately misleading statements in their accounts of their crimes which they have published. We trust the Scottish Petitions Committee will act on our concerns on this crucial matter, which has a harrowing effect on innocent murdered victim’s families. Bearing in mind the European Court of Human Rights ruling that everyone has right to free speech and freedom of expression, we the petitioners request that the Scottish Parliament give serious consideration to bringing in the following legislation, which will give innocent murdered victims families the legal right to challenge in a court of law, false, malicious and deliberate misleading statements published by the convicted murderer or members of their families as factually correct. We the petitioners would like to make it very clear to Scottish Petitions Committee that we the innocent murdered victims families do not want to gain financially in any way, shape or form from such publication. We suggest that any monies ordered by the court in way of fines should be used to help rehabilitate innocent murdered victims families. Bearing in mind the European Court of Human Rights ruling that everyone has right to free speech and freedom of expression, we the petitioners request that the Scottish Parliament give serious consideration to bringing in the following legislation, which will give innocent murdered victims families the legal right to challenge in a court of law, false, malicious and deliberate misleading statements published by the convicted murderer or members of their families as factually correct. We the petitioners would like to make it very clear to Scottish Petitions Committee that we the innocent murdered victims families do not want to gain financially in any way, shape or form from such publication. We suggest that any monies ordered by the court in way of fines should be used to help rehabilitate innocent murdered victims families.

The Petitioner(s) therefore request(s) that the Scottish Parliament.....

Request for action required • Special court to be set-up, with the specific remit to of looking into the true facts of such publications. • These courts must have the power to stop such publication by the convicted murderer, when it is known that such publications affect the mental heath of the innocent murdered victim’s family. • These courts must have the power to order such publications stopped if the court is of the opinion that such publication is a clear infringement of the innocent murdered victim’s family’s legal right to live free from harassment and persecution by the convicted murder or members of the convicted murderer’s family. • These courts must have the power to enforce the European court of Human Rights ruling, which gives every law-abiding citizen in Scotland the legal right to privacy. • Before convicted murderers stories go to print, the publisher must contact the innocent murdered victim’s family to inform them that they have a legal right to study the finished story before it goes to print, on the clear understanding that as the immediate family of the innocent murdered victim, they have legal right to challenge any statements made by the convicted murderer or a member of their family in the aforementioned courts. • Innocent murdered

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/cgi-bin/pubpet.cgi

02/05/02
victims families to be given a full copy of the transcript of the trial. This will enable the innocent murdered victim’s family to give a fully informed and accurate statement in any court action they are forced to take against the convicted murderer and the publisher. • Innocent murdered victims families to be given a full copy of the transcript of the trial. This will enable the innocent murdered victim’s family to give a fully informed and accurate statement in any court action they are forced to take against the convicted murderer and the publisher. • Legal Aid must be given to innocent murdered victims families in such case. • In the interest of true justice for innocent murdered victims and their families we the undersigned would urge the Scottish Parliament to consider bringing in legislation that prevents convicted murderers or members of their families profiting from their crimes in the first instance.

First Petitioner's Details
Name: Mr/Mrs James/Margaret Watson

Second Petitioner's Details
Name: Mr/Mrs James/Kate Mooney

Association: Justice for Victims (Scotland)

Other relevant information:
We have approached the following government department on convicted murderers profiting from their crimes. Prime Minister Tony Blair, The Scottish Office, all MSP’s, Jim Wallace Minister the Scottish Minister Justice and had 2 meeting with Home Office Officials, all of whom have quoted the European Court of Human Rights rulings on freedom of speech and freedom of expression. No of the aforementioned seemed interested in the right of innocent murdered victims to rest in peace or their families to have the legal right to try and rebuild their lives free from precaution and harassment from the convicted murderer or members of their families. No of the aforementioned seemed interested in the right of innocent murdered victims to rest in peace or their families to have the legal right to try and rebuild their lives free from precaution and harassment from the convicted murderer or members of their families.

On-line Submission Date: 7 May 2002

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/cgi-bin/pubpet.cgi

02/05/02
Michael McMahon
Convener of the Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
TG.01
Parliamentary Headquarters
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

07 OCT 2005

Dear Michael McMahon,

Thank you for your letter of 10 August to Baroness Scotland about public petition PE504. I am replying as the Minister now responsible for policy in this area.

I can confirm that it remains our intention to consult on proposals to prevent criminals profiting from publishing accounts of their crimes. Indeed, as you may know, the Labour Party manifesto contained a commitment to bringing forward such proposals.

I am sorry that our plans for a consultation have not progressed more quickly. This is, as you rightly say, a complex and difficult area and it is important to ensure that any new measure we may introduce balances the conflicting public policy requirements in a way that is right and appropriate.

I am conscious that the Scottish Executive will want to consider the applicability to Scots law of any proposals that the Home Office makes for legislative change in England and Wales. We will of course inform the Executive of any significant developments and consult them formally about our proposals in due course.

Whilst I understand the Public Petitions Committee’s concern about delay, and the reasons why the Scottish Executive wishes to await the outcome of our consideration of this complex issue, I would point out that, whatever the
Home Office position, there is nothing to prevent separate action being taken in Scotland.

FIONA MACTAGGART
Petition by Lilian Lawson, on behalf of the Scottish Council on Deafness, calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to develop and establish a specialist inpatient mental health unit for deaf and deafblind people and to provide resources (e.g. training) for mainstream psychiatric services in the community to make them more accessible to deaf and deafblind people in Scotland.
SCOTTISH COUNCIL ON DEAFNESS

Central Chambers, Suite 62 1st Floor, 93 Hope Street, Glasgow G2 6LD
Telephone: 0141 248 2474 • Textphone: 0141 248 2477 • Fax: 0141 248 2479
E-mail: admin@scod.org.uk • Website: www.scod.org.uk

Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Tuesday 11th January 2005

To the Scottish Parliament

**Mental Health Services for Deaf and Deafblind People**

We, the undersigned, declare that......

*For many years, Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD) and its 93 member organisations have fought for specialist mental health services for deaf and deafblind people. The specialist services would have staff who could communicate effectively with deaf and deafblind people; who had knowledge of the culture and language of deaf people and were aware of the issues which may impact on their mental health. Staff lacking these attributes may not be able to diagnose correctly and treat appropriately mental health problems in deaf and deafblind people.*

*In early 1990’s, SCoD and deaf organisations enlisted support from representatives of local NHS trusts to establish bi-monthly outreach clinics in Edinburgh and Glasgow, provided by the National Centre for Mental Health and Deafness, John Denmark Unit in Manchester. Whilst this was welcomed as a stop-gap measure to ensure that there was some means of enabling deaf patients to access specialist services, it was less than ideal. There are constraints in operating a service at a considerable distance; clinics may be cancelled at short notice due to staffing difficulties and there is no alternative in place. It also means that there is no specialist support for deaf patients outwith these specific treatment times.*

*As well as the need for establishing specialist services relevant to the needs of Deaf Sign Language users with “severe and/or enduring mental illness”, there is an additional need to improve access to generic, community based psychiatric services. Training needs to be resourced to extend awareness and ensure the provision of communication support.*

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The Scottish umbrella body representing the interests of local and national voluntary organisations, local authority social work, education and health departments working with Deaf Sign Language users, deafened, deafblind and hard of hearing people.

The Council’s Scottish Charities Index Number is SCO16957
By comparison, in England, there are at least three specialist units where
deaf and deafblind people with mental health problems are treated by
staff who have appropriate communication skills and knowledge of their
language, culture and issues. Deaf and deafblind people in Scotland are
currently disadvantaged because services have not been reasonably
adjusted to meet their needs and comply with the DDA.

Scottish deaf and deafblind patients with mental health problems have to
attend the nearest specialist unit – the John Denmark Unit – in
Manchester for assessment and treatment. There is a waiting list for their
first appointments with a consultant psychiatrist.

Therefore, we, the Scottish Council on Deafness, request that the Scottish
Parliament ........

To commit the Scottish Executive to develop and establish a specialist
inpatient mental health unit for deaf and deafblind people and to provide
resources (e.g. training) for mainstream psychiatric services in the
community to make them more accessible to deaf and deafblind people in
Scotland.

We, the petitioners have already been approached by the member
organisations for assistance in resolving the issues contained in our
petition.

Lilian Lawson
Director
Scottish Council on Deafness

Enc: Letters of Support & Briefing Paper
I refer to Richard Hough’s letter of 13 July requesting further comments on the consideration of Petition PE 808 about improved access to mental health services for deaf and deafblind people.

I have been asked to comment on the views offered by the John Denmark Unit, Manchester and the Royal National Institute for Deaf People. The main issues raised are around better access to mainstream services; development of primary care and community care services; resources; and the need for a specialist in-patient unit for deaf and deafblind people in Scotland.

I firmly believe that all care services in Scotland should be designed to be accessible by all and I accept that we face a number of difficult challenges to ensure that improvements to mental health services for deaf, deafblind and others with a sensory loss are delivered. These are challenges that will require joint action from Agencies to respond to all needs and provide care and support where and when it is needed.

Rhona Brankin’s letter of 12 April outlined some of the initiatives the Executive is progressing to improve access to services including research, health improvement and well-being and measures to increase the numbers of BSL interpreters in Scotland.

We have now published the guidance referred to in that letter to bring about change and improved access to mainstream care provision for people with sensory loss and a mental health problem (www.show.scot.nhs.uk/sehd/mels/HDL2005_27.pdf). The guidance offers a template and planning tool for agencies and will help inform NHS Boards and others of services and approaches that respond to the assessed and forecast needs of patients in their area. The guidance focuses on improved access, awareness, communications, training and other related issues and offers advice to help address and remove obstacles to barrier free access. I expect agencies to take account of this guidance when planning and developing new services and in redesigning and improving existing services. NHS Boards will be asked to submit a joint local progress report in July 2006 to show the combined agency position on progress made and action still required.
The Executive has supported the NHS and local authorities in improving existing and developing new health and social care services in general by providing substantial increases in resources in real terms over the last 5 years, and spending plans for future years show that this trend will continue. It is of course the responsibility of NHS Boards to work with their partners to plan and provide effective services that are appropriate to needs, offer quality care and achieve value for money. This is no different when considering the needs of deaf and deafblind people who have a mental health problem. NHS Boards have the local knowledge necessary to link with the wider public and voluntary sector to develop these services. While NHS Boards no doubt have more to do in developing services in this area, I believe that the initiatives in hand will support change and improvement towards the required level and quality of care and support.

I also expect NHS Boards to keep under review the need for specialist in-patient services in Scotland. The guidance issued by the Executive promotes this approach and the need for ongoing needs assessment. Boards are advised to consider options for local, regional and out of area services and provision by the independent sector or from outwith Scotland.

Finally, I am aware of the RNID “Futurebuilders Scotland” application lodged with Communities Scotland for funds to provide a crisis intervention service and centre for deaf and deafblind people. I understand that RNID has been asked to provide more detailed information which will then be considered fully, a process which officials in the Health Department will be involved in.

I hope this is helpful.

LEWIS MACDONALD
Petition by Margaret Tait, on behalf of the Stoneybank Tenants and Residents Association, Musselburgh, calls on the Scottish Parliament to request the Post Office to consider sympathetically the needs and requirements of disabled and elderly persons who in urban areas in Scotland would be expected to walk substantial distances, sometimes in excess of 2 miles, as a result of possible closure of certain sub post offices.
Petition by Margaret Tait, on behalf of the Strengford Tenants and Residents Association, Muschamp

urges the Scottish Parliament to request the Post Office to consider sympathetically the needs and requirements of disabled and elderly persons, who in urban areas in Scotland would be expected to walk substantial distances, sometimes in excess of 2 miles, as a result of a possible closure of certain sub-post offices.
Dr James Johnston  
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee  
TG.01  
Parliamentary Headquarters  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP  

Your ref: PE764  
Our ref: PE764  
7 September 2005  

Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee- Consideration PE764

Thank you for your letter of 29 July concerning PE764.

In response to your enquiry about the reconstitution of the Executive’s Fund to Develop Post Offices in Deprived Urban Areas (PO Fund), this was originally intended as a two year programme which would operate over the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2005. This broadly fitted with the roll-out of PO Ltd’s Urban Reinvention Programme.

However, in terms of the PO Fund, at 31 March 2005 there were still some approved projects where work was in progress (and invoices had yet to be submitted for payment) as well as a limited amount of unallocated resources. The decision was therefore taken to continue accepting applications into the 2005/06 financial year to ensure that the £2m allocated to the PO Fund was fully utilised.

On 12 August 2005 the PO Fund was closed to new applications. This was necessary to ensure that, within the funds remaining, Communities Scotland could:

- honour all funding approved but still to be invoiced for payment;
- assess a small number of applications which had been received and were still under active consideration; and
- invite applications from 22 subpostoffices who we had identified as eligible to apply for funding as a result of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (SIMD-04).

The decision to close the Fund was agreed, in advance, with the PO Fund Advisory Board. The Board has representatives from Royal Mail Group, Post Office Ltd, Federation of Subpostmasters, Scottish Enterprise and Postwatch. Letters were also sent to all subpostmasters who were eligible to apply for funding to inform them of the closure of the PO Fund. These letters allowed a two week
“window of opportunity” to 26 August 2005 for anyone who was in the process of actively gathering evidence to support an intended application.

Scottish Ministers currently have no plans to allocate further funding to provide for capital improvements to post offices in deprived urban areas. By 31 March 2006 all of the £2m allocated to the PO Fund will have been fully utilised. The programme will then be evaluated and findings shared widely.

Funding of £250,000 has been allocated by Communities Scotland to provide Specialist Business Improvement Training for Subpostmasters (SBITS) in deprived urban and rural settings. This funding is intended to help subpostmasters operate their businesses more effectively and in turn benefit people in the disadvantaged communities they serve by maintaining the socially important services which subpostoffices can provide. Communities Scotland will work with Scottish Enterprise and Highland and Islands Enterprise to deliver SBITS by 31 March 2006.

In relation to your enquiry about the Executive’s plans to increase the fund available to post offices in the 20 per cent most deprived areas, Scottish Ministers have no plans to allocate further funding to provide for capital improvements to post offices in deprived urban areas. No decision has yet been made on the focus for SBITS, although it is likely this will be the 20% most deprived urban and rural areas under SIMD-04.

I hope this is helpful, but please let me know if you need any further information.

LINDA CRAIK
PS/DD
Dr James Johnston  
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee  
Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP  

23 August 2005

Dear Dr Johnston

Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee – Consideration PE764

Further to your letter regarding the petition from Margaret Tait on behalf of the Stoneyburn Tenants and Residents Association.

In response to the petition our comments are as follows:

Post Office Ltd always sympathetically looks at the needs and requirements of its elderly and disabled customers. Throughout the Urban Reinvention programme, conducted in 2003 and 2004 throughout town and city locations in Scotland, a full six-week consultation for each proposed Post Office® branch closure was carried out at length. This included, in many cases, public meetings and community drop-in sessions. The review of the network resulted in 145 branch closures throughout the urban areas in Scotland.

The programme was developed simply because the Post Office Ltd network in urban areas was becoming non viable and un-sustainable, there were simply too many branches for the number of customers and doing nothing was not an option for the business.

Failure on the part of Post Office Limited not to take any action to reduce the network would have seen unplanned closures throughout the country. This would have resulted in gaps in the network and left customers with even further to travel. These closures were aimed at securing the long-term future of the remaining branches and the programme was a voluntary one which was supported by each subpostmaster concerned.
Post Office Limited aims to have at least 95% of customers in urban areas within one mile of a Post Office and the current position, even after the programme, is that over 99% of customers within urban areas are within a mile of a Post Office branch. The business has to balance access to services with commercial sustainability.

Prior to putting forward closures proposals Post Office Ltd carried out extensive planning to identify the most appropriate branches and to ensure that the remaining network provided good access for customers. This planning involved the identification of local transport facilities and also visits to the area to identify any specific local conditions. Post Office Ltd took into account the views of elected members, the public and our customers through the consultation process. The business also ensured that the nearest alternative branches were identified and communicated to customers, in many cases the nearest alternative branch was within a mile.

For example, Mrs Reid’s address is very close to the Mcktonhall branch, which was closed under the programme. The map attached shows the remaining branches in the Musselburgh area, with one mile radius circles. As you can see, there is no urban residential area outside of a mile. Ms Tait lives within one mile of the Post Office Fisherton branch and Mrs Reid, over the other side of Edinburgh, has three branches within one mile.

In all cases we looked at the terrain that customers would have to travel on as well as public transport links before putting forward any proposals. Post Office Ltd staff also walked the ground to check that there was nothing untoward that the business had missed. And we are confident that in this specific case, the remaining Post Office branches were in areas where many of our customers already conducted shopping.

Additionally, throughout the network, subpostmasters in the remaining branches had the opportunity to access the £30m Government Investment grant to make improvements to their branches and Post Office Ltd have also provided around £6m in grants under its DDA scheme. These grants have resulted in significant improvements at Post Office branches, many of which have been specifically designed to assist disabled and elderly customers, including agreements to install around 850 entrance ramps, over 500 automatic doors and over 1000 hearing loops.

Improvements to opening hours or the range of services were also made at many alternative branches which benefited from the extra footfall as customers migrated from the closing branch, helping to make them more viable into the future.

The Post Office network continues to be the largest retail network within the UK with around 14500 branches and 1741 in Scotland. The business has diversified into a new range of financial products and other services including car and home insurance, foreign currency and homephone. The Post Office also offers a range of banking services enabling many customers to access cash free at the counter. A recent survey entitled cash nation carried out for the Post Office, shows that 5 Scottish locations are the top five in the UK, which now have better access to cash thanks to Post Office Services (Please see attached information for reference). Post Office Limited is also introducing more free cash machines into branches.
When it comes to Post Office® services, Scotland is the best served country!

The Post Office® ‘Cash Nation’ survey for Scotland today (August 25) reveals that the top five locations where banking provision is increased the most by the presence of a Post Office® are in Scotland.

Out of 20 areas surveyed, The Hebrides, Kirkwall, Paisley, The Shetlands and Perth came out top with Dumfries and Galloway joining them in on the list as it has also increased its banking provision through Post Office branches.

The survey also reveals that people in Scotland are the least likely to plan in advance when it comes to deciding on how much cash they will need:

- Scots have the highest frequency of withdrawals of cash in the UK - 39% of people in Scotland withdraw cash more than three times a week, compared to the average of 31%.
- The survey also shows that over half of Scots don’t plan ahead when taking cash out.
- In addition, Scots do not carry that much cash with them at any one time. Nearly three quarters say they have less than £30 in their wallets at any one time, and only 2% have over £100.
- The Scottish are the most likely to make a trip just to withdraw cash with half saying they make specific journey’s to take cash out, compared to the UK average of only 43%.
• People in Scotland are amongst the highest users of ATMs, with 64% of the population saying this is where they are most likely to withdraw their cash, compared to the national average of 57%.

Graham Halliday, Director of Banking & Financial Services said: “Our Cash Nation survey reveals that the Post Office® has increased accessibility to banking services for the population in rural areas increasingly neglected by other financial service providers, particularly in Scotland.”

**Distance to Banking Services**

In addition if we look at distance to banking services, the Post Office® analysis reveals that in certain areas the Post Office® presence significantly increases the accessibility of the population to banking services. For example the Post office® brings people on mainland Scotland on average 1.44km closer to banking facilities than they would otherwise be.

Post Office Ltd continually looks at ways of sustaining and maintaining services, particularly in more rural areas. We provide access to Post Office® services in many different ways, from serving our customers from cupboards in sub-postmasters homes, from garden huts and in some cases through mobile Post Office® vehicles. The more diverse ways we look at providing services the greater chance services will survive well into the future.

“Graham Halliday continued: “Our results also reveal that easy access to cash is still important to us all, and people should make sure they are accessing cash for free. With the vast majority of the UK population living within a mile of a Post Office® branch, accessing your cash through the Post Office® network couldn't be easier.”

The Post Office® offers free cash withdrawal services at its 14,600 branches and 1741 in Scotland on behalf of a wide range of high street banks. The Post Office® is not only the biggest single cash network in the UK, it is also one of most popular - cash withdrawals at Post Office® branches have trebled in the past year to almost 1 million a day.
Ends
NOTES TO EDITORS

ICM Research interviewed a random sample of 2069 adults aged 18+ by telephone between 8th - 23rd June 2005. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all UK adults. ICM is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.

Post Office Banking Statistics
- 94% of people live within one mile of the Post Office®, this figure rises to 99% in urban areas
- 4% of rural areas have a bank, whereas 60% have a Post Office branch®

Total bank, building society and Post Office® outlets in the UK:
- High street banks 11,227 (excluding agents)
- Building Societies 2,436 (excluding agents)
- Post Offices 14,609

Further information on the Post Office®
The Post Office® offers free cash withdrawal services for customers with basic bank accounts at all UK banks. It also offers free cash withdrawal services for current account customers on behalf of a number of High Street Banks – Alliance & Leicester, Bank of Ireland, Barclays, Cahoot, Clydesdale, Co-Operative and Lloyds TSB.

The Post Office® is the biggest cash handler in the country – with more than £92 billion passing through its hands each year. 17p in every £1 in circulation goes through a Post Office® branch.

In conjunction with its partners, the Post Office® offers over 170 products and services including travel and financial services (including personal loans, car and home insurance), banking services, bill payments, lottery products, licence applications, phonecards and mobile phone top-ups, and postal services. It is the largest supplier of foreign currency in the UK and is a leading provider of travel insurance.
In the year ending March 2005, the Post Office Ltd turnover was £1,287 million. Post Office Ltd is a separate limited company within the Royal Mail Group.
Public Petitions Committee – a template for public petitions

Should you wish to submit a public petition for consideration by the Public Petitions Committee please complete the template below. Please refer to the Guidance on submission of public petitions for advice on issues of admissibility before completing the template. You may also seek advice from the Clerk to the Committee whose contact details can be found at the end of this form.

Details of principal petitioner:
Please enter the name of person and organisation raising the petition, including a contact address where correspondence should be sent to, email address and phone number if available

Mrs F.C. Bowman

Text of petition:
The petition should clearly state what action the petitioner wishes the Parliament to take in no more than 5 lines of text, e.g.
The petitioner requests that the Scottish Parliament considers and debates the implications of the proposed Agenda for Change legislation for Speech and Language Therapy Services and service users within the NHS

The petitioner requests that the Scottish Parliament....... Petition by Mrs F.C. Bowman calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to review the use of chloramine disinfectant in the treatment of drinking water.

Additional information:
Any additional information in relation to your petition, including reasons why the action requested is necessary, should not be included here. However, it may be appended to the petition and will be made available to the Public Petitions Committee prior to its consideration of your petition. Please note that you should limit the amount of any additional information which you may wish to provide in support of your petition to no more than 4 sides of A4.
Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition:

Before submitting a petition to the Parliament, petitioners are expected to have made an attempt to resolve their issues of concern by, for example, making representations to the Scottish Executive or seeking the assistance of locally elected representatives, such as councillors, MSPs and MPs. Please enter details of those approached below and append copies of relevant correspondence, which will be made available to the Public Petitions Committee prior to its consideration of your petition.

Have sought the assistance of locally elected representatives below:

Jamie Stone MSP, Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross

Lord Thurso MP, House of Commons

Request to speak:

Petitioners may request to appear before the Public Petitions Committee in support of their petition, although it should be noted that requests to speak will only be granted if the Convener considers that a brief statement from the petitioner would be useful in facilitating the Committee's consideration of the petition. Due to the large volume of petitions being considered the Committee will usually only hear presentations on up to 4 new petitions at each meeting.

Please indicate below whether you wish to request to make a brief statement before the Committee when it comes to consider your petition.

Yes / No*

*Delete as appropriate

Signature of principal petitioner:

When satisfied that your petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Guidance on submission of public petitions, the principal petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below. Other signatures gathered should be appended to this form.

Signature .................................

Date 18/4/05

Please note that any additional information, copies of relevant correspondence and additional signatures should be appended to this form and submitted to:

The Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee,
The Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5186 Fax: 0131 348 5088
e-mail: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Environment and Rural Affairs Department
Richard Wakeford, Head of Department

Richard Hough Esq
Assistant Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

14 September 2005

David Brown
Private Secretary

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE
CONSIDERATION OF PE842

Thank you for your letter of 17 August about petition PE842 from Mrs Bowman. I understand that the Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland responded to the Clerk yesterday. As he is the expert adviser to Ministers on issues relating to drinking water quality we are content with his substantive response to you on the use of Chloramines disinfectant.
1 July 2005

Dr James Johnston
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
TG.01
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Dear Dr Johnston

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Public Petitions Committee about PE842 by Mrs Bowman which asks for a review of the use of chloramination as a means of disinfecting drinking water.

We welcome the opportunity to provide the Committee with information and I have enclosed our response for consideration.

I would like to emphasise that public health is our primary concern and we take the concerns of our customers about their drinking water extremely seriously. Drinking water in the UK must meet strict legislative requirements for quality and we are obligated to provide customers with drinking water which is free from harmful bacteria. Chloramination is a well-recognised and accepted process for disinfecting drinking water which has been safely used in Scotland, as well as for many years in the US, Canada, and England.

Our response to the committee includes an analysis of the complaints we have received from customers supplied by the North Coast scheme, which includes Skerry, an overview of our investigations and what we have done to date to address customer concerns, as well as general information about chloramination. I am sure you will be pleased to know our investigations have shown the water is safe to drink, meets legislative requirements for drinking water quality, and poses no risk to public health.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact us if we can answer any further questions.

Yours sincerely

Dr Jon Hargreaves
Chief Executive

SCOTTISH WATER
PUBLIC PETITIONS
4 (11th) 2005
SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT
North Coast Regional Scheme & the Skerray Water Supply

Background

As part of its investment programme to improve drinking water quality, North of Scotland Water Authority, and subsequently Scottish Water, developed the North Coast Regional Scheme, which was a £28.4 million investment in a new water treatment works near Halkirk and 85 km of new pipeline which runs from Loch Calder along the north coast to Tongue.

The works serves all of Caithness and parts of Sutherland and was commissioned in April 2004, although some of the more distant communities such as Tongue were connected up to the new supply by October 2004.

The scheme replaced a total of 11 different water treatment systems, most of which dated from the 1950s and 1960s and had reached the end of their useful lives. Each of the 11 works needed investment to meet modern legislative standards and improve the quality of the drinking water.

While the new treatment process provides a similar water supply to the Caithness and Wick area, it replaces the poorer North Sutherland supplies with fully treated drinking water. For instance, at Skerray investment was needed to meet the increasingly strict standard for trihalomethane levels (THMs) which was introduced in 2004. In addition, the old Skerray water supply did not meet standards for Aluminium, Colour, pH, Iron, and Manganese. The new water supply at Skerray is now treated to a high standard which meets legislative requirements.

Chloramination

Chloramination was a new approach in supplying the North Coast Regional Scheme. This was chosen as it was viewed that this would be the only way of ensuring a residual chlorine coverage of the entire network. A certain amount of chlorine needs to be present in the drinking water at customer taps to ensure the disinfection process has successfully protected the drinking water supply throughout the whole distribution system.

Analysis of the disinfection levels across the regional system compared to previous levels in the old local supplies confirms the effectiveness of chloramination. It is clear the disinfectant levels are more consistent. At some times the residuals are higher than the old supply and this difference will be due to the rapid water quality changes which occurred in the old supplies and often resulted in chlorine residual levels which were extremely low. As a result, some customers may notice a difference in the taste and smell of their drinking water.

Customer complaints

Since the introduction of the new water treatment works, Scottish Water received a number of taste complaints across the new North Coast network. While all samples analysed were fully compliant with the regulations and showed no evidence of any taste-forming substances, a full investigation has been undertaken as a result of customer concerns.
This investigation has looked at all aspects of the operation of the water treatment works, any potential issues arising from the construction and operation of the network and any other factors which may have contributed to the customer complaints. Scottish Water has been tracking customer complaints since June 2004 and the table below highlights the number of complaints received in the area:

![Graph showing Caithness Regional/North Coast Taste Complaints]

It has proved difficult to profile these complaints both by area or type and whilst there was a higher prevalence of these in the Thurso area in the early months this is no longer the case. It is also clear that a number of musty taste complaints reported in September 2004 could be attributed to an increase in Geosmin levels from Loch Calder.

**Actions taken**

A full evaluation of the treatment process has been carried out at Loch Calder water treatment works and changes made to the level of residual within the drinking water. The original chloramines target level was set at 0.8milligrams/litre (mg/l) and following regular reviews this was reduced to 0.7 mg/l in mid-October 2004 and then to 0.6 in early April 2005.

In addition, early on a number of flushing exercises were undertaken throughout the distribution system in an effort to resolve customer complaints. These have proven to be successful in most circumstances. The flushing of the pipes, along with the reduction in the residual level, has resulted in fewer customer complaints, as shown in the table above. The last complaints logged include one in mid-April, with none received in May and one received during the month of June 2005. However, some complaints seem to be more persistent, particularly in the Skerray area.

**Ongoing actions**

In response to the issues that have been raised, Scottish Water is currently carrying out a number of ongoing actions. These consist of:

- Increasing the frequency of monitoring chlorine residuals at key service reservoirs.
- Carrying out monochloramine testing at key locations in support of the above monitoring.
- Undertaking a full programme of chemical samples across the entire distribution system which will cover all the regulatory parameters listed in the Water Quality Scotland Regulations 2000.
- Continuing to map the frequency of customer complaints as shown earlier.
Summary Overview

- Based on the analysis of water quality data, the North Coast Regional Scheme is compliant with the Water Quality Scotland Regulations 2000.
- While there are some ongoing issues with the operation of mechanical items within the treatment works, these do not have any serious impact on final water quality.
- Since September 2004 the number of customer complaints received in this area has been steadily reducing. The recent reduction in residuals across the system has undoubtedly contributed to this, as has the flushing programme.
- Nothing in the significant number of samples taken to date indicates the presence of any taste-generating substances. The water meets legislative requirements for drinking water quality and is safe to drink.

Chloramination

What is chloramination?

Chloramination is a process which is used to disinfect drinking water after it has been fully treated to remove impurities and harmful bacteria. Like chlorination, chloramination ensures the treated drinking water remains free of harmful bacteria as it travels from the treatment works through the water pipelines and to homes and businesses. However, chloramination uses smaller amounts of chlorine than would normally be required to disinfect drinking water. This chlorine is combined with a very small amount of ammonia to form chloramines.

Is chloramination necessary?

It is necessary to disinfect drinking water after it has been treated and impurities have been removed. Disinfection ensures drinking water remains free of bacteria when it reaches customers’ homes and businesses.

Adding chlorine to drinking water is a more recognised form of disinfection and for many years was the most reliable way of treating drinking water in Scotland. However, in areas where drinking water has to travel greater distances through pipelines before serving customers, a significant amount of chlorine is often required both at the treatment works and again at various spots along the distribution system to ensure the water remains free of harmful bacteria.

Many customers do not like the taste and smell of chlorine and chloramination provides a practicable alternative. Less chlorine is needed and the disinfectant lasts longer within the pipe distribution system. Indeed, in many areas where chloramination has been introduced in Scotland, there has been a drop in the number of taste and smell complaints received.

In addition, chlorine mixes with naturally occurring organic materials which are common in the raw water found in many areas of Scotland, creating an impurity known as Trihalomethanes (THMs). New drinking water quality standards are now in place to ensure the process of removing any impurities from drinking water does not itself create new impurities such as THMs. Chloramination reduces the amount of chlorine needed and this reduces the level of THMs.
**Are chloramines safe?**

Chloramination is a well-recognised and accepted process for disinfecting drinking water. Chloramines have been safely used in parts of the US, Canada and England for many years. In fact, Denver Colorado has used chloramines since 1917.

The process of chloramination has been approved by the Drinking Water Quality Regulator as well as an independent UK Committee which evaluates and approves a list of products and processes which can be used for drinking water. Chloramination is also recognised by the World Health Organisation as well as the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health (SCIEH).

Chloraminated water is no different than chlorinated water for everyday usage. Water that contains chloramines is totally safe to drink and the digestive process neutralises the chloramines before they reach the blood stream. However, there are two groups of people who must take special precautions with chloraminated water: kidney dialysis patients and fish and aquatic pet owners. Most fish and aquatic pet owners are aware that chlorine is harmful to fish and chloramines are similarly harmful to fresh and salt-water fish. The harmful effects can be neutralised using water conditioning agents and biological filters available from pet shops.

Kidney dialysis patients can safely drink, cook and bathe (including bathing wounds) in chloraminated water. However, in the dialysis process, water comes into contact with blood across a permeable membrane. Chloramines are harmful when they interact directly with the bloodstream during the dialysis process and must be removed from water used in kidney dialysis machines.

**Scottish Water Consultation**

Before chloramination is introduced, Scottish Water notifies the relevant Health Authorities and the NHS Boards take steps to make sure the equipment used in their renal care plans is modified accordingly and is safe to use. In addition, the NHS Boards make certain home dialysis machines are modified accordingly.

Scottish Water also carries out a public notification process in advance of introducing chloraminated water, notifying local doctors, area pet shops, key community organisations and customers, as well as issuing public notices/adverts and working with the local media.

**Drinking Water Supplies Currently Chloraminated in Scotland**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glenfarg WTW, Perthshire</th>
<th>Fairmilehead WTW, Edinburgh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brig O’Turk WTW, Glen Finglas</td>
<td>Rawburn WTW, near Duns, Berwickshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberton WTW, near Hawick</td>
<td>Invercannie WTW, Aberdeen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mannofield WTW, Aberdeen</td>
<td>Glendye WTW, Banchory, Aberdeenshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwickhill WTW, Edinburgh</td>
<td>Ft William Wellfield WTW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marchbank WTW, Balerno, Midlothian</td>
<td>Loch Calder WTW, Caithness &amp; Sutherland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backies WTW, Golspie, Sutherland</td>
<td>West Lewis WTW, Western Isles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newmore WTW, Invergordon, Ross-shire</td>
<td>Gallowhill WTW, Perthshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assynt WTW, near Evanton, Ross-shire</td>
<td>Inverness WTW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolsta WTW, Western Isles</td>
<td>Uig WTW, Western Isles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Lochs WTW, Western Isles</td>
<td>Clunas WTW, Nairn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being introduced - Loch Carron WTW</td>
<td>Being introduced - Orkney</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dr James Johnston  
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
TG.01  
Parliamentary Headquarters  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP  

Dear Dr Johnston  

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE  
CONSIDERATION PE842  

Thank you for your letter dated 24 May to Tim Hooton, the Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland, seeking his comments on the petition by Mrs Bowman calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to review the use of chloramine disinfectant in the treatment of drinking water. I have been asked to respond to your request.

Firstly, I would like to apologise for the delay in replying to your letter. Unfortunately, the DWQR did not receive your original letter but the fact that you had written to the DWQR was brought to his attention by Scottish Water and the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health (now Health Protection Scotland). DWQR therefore appreciates the extension to the deadline granted to him for replying to the Committee.

Under regulation 25 of the Water Supply (Water Quality) (Scotland) Regulations 2001, Scottish Water is required to disinfect water before it is supplied to customers. The normal method for doing this in Scotland, until recently, has been through the use of chlorine. However, chlorine reacts with the organic (peaty) content of some waters in Scotland to produce disinfection by-products called tri-halomethanes (THMs). There is an upper limit in the regulations for THMs but the World Health Organisation is very clear that “in attempting to control disinfection by-product concentrations, it is of paramount importance that the efficiency of disinfection is not compromised and that a suitable level of disinfection is maintained throughout the distribution system”.

In order to meet the THM standard and ensure that a suitable level of disinfection is maintained throughout the distribution system, Scottish Water has changed the type of disinfection used in a number of supplies from chlorination to chloramination. Chloramination is not new, it has been used to disinfect water supplies in England (for example London) for many years and it is also common practice in the USA and Canada.
Chloramination involves the addition of ammonia to chlorinated water to form monochloramine. Monochloramine levels are controlled by Scottish Water by monitoring the total chlorine levels in supply. The vast majority of the chlorine in chloraminated water will exist as monochloramine but there will be a small residual amount of chlorine available as free chlorine (less than 0.1mg/litre) in the distribution system.

There is no upper or lower limit set in the 2001 regulations for disinfectant but there is a zero standard for bacteria so Scottish Water has to introduce sufficient disinfectant to kill any bacteria that may be present. The WHO Guidelines however set a guideline value for monochloramine of 3 mg/litre but WHO also acknowledge that the taste threshold for monochloramines is below this health based guideline value. The WHO report that chloramine concentrations of 0.5 to 2 mg/litre are typically found in drinking water supplies where chloramine is used to provide a chlorine residual in the distribution system.

The public water supply serving the petitioner, Mrs Bowman, is chloraminated and when it was introduced in May 2004, a target value of 0.8 mg/litre total chlorine was set by Scottish Water for water leaving the treatment works. Regulatory sampling data shows that total chlorine levels rose to about 0.9 mg/litre during August and September 2004, which coincides with the time when Scottish Water received a significant number of taste and odour complaints from customers on the supply. The rise in total chlorine levels occurred at a time when work was being carried out on the treatment works. In October 2004, following a review of total chlorine levels by Scottish Water, the target level at the works was reduced to 0.7 mg/litre. In April 2005, the target level was reduced further to 0.6 mg/litre. These levels are all well within World Health Organisation Guidelines.

In the 5 months since April 2005, Scottish Water has received just 3 complaints from the public regarding the quality of the water supplied to Mrs Bowman and the surrounding area, this compares with 88 quality complaints in the preceding 5 months.

I hope this explains the situation from the DWQR’s point of view but if you require any further information, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Anderson
For and on behalf of the DWQR
Dr James Johnston  
Public Petitions Committee  
TG.01 Parliamentary Headquarters  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP  

1st September 2005  

Dear Dr Johnston  

Petition PE842 – Use of chloramine disinfectant in treatment of drinking water  

Thank-you for the opportunity to comment on this petition. Unfortunately this is not a matter on which we are able to comment in great depth, as we do not have the resources to cover every environmental concern fully. However, the information we do have leads us to support the proposal of a review.  

It is widely considered that chloramine disinfection is preferable to chlorination for treatment of drinking water. However, it is not necessarily the first best option for environmental and health protection reasons: that being either ozone or ultraviolet radiation. These treatments can eliminate or at least massively reduce (by in the order of 90%) the need for chloramine use. In our understanding, best practice uses ozone or ultraviolet to treat water at the plant, and if then necessary, limited amounts of chloramines only to ensure that bacterial reinfection does not happen in the distribution network.  

We have received a number of calls from concerned individuals regarding this issue, and previously contacted Scottish Water, who appeared unconcerned.  

There are serious risks to fish and other aquatic life from discharges of chloraminated water into watercourses. Chloramines are toxic to aquatic life. Incidental discharges such as from garden watering are unlikely to have significant impacts, but leakages from water-supply pipes, and other large discharges are of concern. Scottish Water must ensure that measures are in place to control leakage, and to ensure that a dechlorinating agent is used to remove chloramine from water during major leaks.  

Certain user groups: notably kidney dialysis patients, aquarium owners, and businesses or industries that use water in their treatment process must remove chloramine from the water prior to use. Suitable techniques are commercially
available, but Scottish Water should ensure that adequate information is made available to such users.

We are aware that the introduction of chloramine disinfectant in place of chlorination in some water supply regions in the USA has led to increased mobilisation of lead from lead piping. Monitoring should be undertaken to assess whether this is happening in Scotland. However, the best environmental health response to this impact would be to accelerate the replacement of the lead piping (or solder), rather than necessarily to avoid use of chloramines.

In summary, we believe there are good precautionary reasons for minimising the use of chloramines. A review is therefore merited, to help ensure that Scottish Water employs current best practice in treatment and management of water supplies, so as to protect both human health and the environment.

Yours sincerely

Duncan McLaren
Chief Executive
Dr James Johnston  
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
TG.01, Parliamentary Headquarters  
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

Email: james.johnston@scottish.parliament.uk

Dear Dr Johnston

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE – CONSIDERATION PE842

Further to your correspondence, dated 24 May, regarding a petition by Mrs F C Bowman, we are pleased to provide our comments. We have limited these to the potential impacts of chloramination on the environment, which is our area of responsibility and expertise.

Scottish Water first approached SEPA in 2003, while piloting the use of chloramination as an alternative disinfectant for the final treatment of public drinking water supplies. SEPA was asked to establish whether the use of chloramines in the network poses a risk to the environment or requires any special measures as part of planned maintenance and other activities.

Current water treatment methods use chlorine-based products for disinfection prior to distribution. They are also used for cleaning and disinfection of water storage reservoirs and pipelines. Consequently, occasional releases to the environment occur during maintenance. Management of these has been addressed through the Hygiene Code of Practice, which ensures their appropriate treatment or discharge. SEPA is not aware of any environmental incidents associated with drinking water discharges to date.

To assess the appropriateness of chloramination as an alternative to chlorine, SEPA carried out a risk assessment using the toxicology data available for both disinfectants. The results of this work showed that the environmental risk from the use of chloramines is comparable to that from chlorine.

SEPA, therefore, concluded that occasional releases of chloraminated water to environment present no additional risk to the health of freshwater fish, as long as they are treated according to current practice. The Hygiene Code of Practice should, therefore, be maintained as good practice for the control of planned releases from the water distribution network.

We trust the above comments provide a useful summary of SEPA’s involvement in the review of chloramination to date.

Yours sincerely

Campbell Gemmell  
Chief Executive

Chairman:  
Sir Ken Collins

Chief Executive:  
Dr Campbell Gemmell
Dear Dr Johnston

Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee – Consideration PE842

With reference to your request for advice on the minimum acceptable concentrations for chloramines in drinking water.

The short answer is that, according to my understanding of the issue, there is no set minimum level as such. The minimum level is that which is necessary to achieve adequate decontamination of the water, sufficient for the water to meet the drinking water quality regulations in terms of the absence of microbiological indicator organisms. Hence the minimum dose of chloramines required to achieve satisfactory disinfection will depend on a whole range of factors.

These will include:

- The microbiological quality of the source water
- The type of treatment system and type of filtration used
- The size of the supply in terms of volume of water
- The length of pipework in the distribution system
- The number of storage tanks in the distribution system
- The time taken for the water to reach the furthest supply points from the treatment works

Chloramination is favoured over other methods in some circumstances because it is a longer lasting and more persistent disinfectant than other standard forms of chlorination.

Chloramination is also favoured particularly in some Scottish situations as a means of reducing the potential for the creation of chlorination by-products. Treatment methods of disinfection using chlorine based chemistry have been associated with the formation of chemicals such as tri-
halomethanes (eg chloroform). These are formed by the combination of chlorine with other organic chemicals often found naturally occurring in upland sources of water. These organic chemicals are complex hydrocarbons which often impart a distinctive colour to water (being derived from peat and other organic material within the water catchment area). There is some (though conflicting) evidence that chlorination by-products, including probably tri-halomethanes may be associated with some adverse health effects. For that reason it is considered desirable to keep tri-halomethanes to a minimum. One way to do this is to substitute chloramination which combines chlorine with ammonia as a disinfectant instead of chlorine itself.

Although there is no set minimum level of chloramines for disinfection purposes, the World Health Organisation advises that typical levels of 0.5 to 2mg/litre are generally found where chloramines are used for drinking water disinfection.¹ The upper limit advised by WHO is 3mg/litre. WHO also advise that while it is possible to manipulate disinfection systems to reduce the level of chloramines (monochloramine) in water to practically nil, it is normal practice to maintain a small residual amount of chloramine (less than 0.1mg/L) to act as a disinfection preservative.

I hope the above is helpful and if you require further assistance please feel free to contact me again.

Yours sincerely

Dr Colin Ramsay
Consultant Epidemiologist

¹ Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality 2004