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

Judith McCrorie

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......

Support by

Petition by Judith McCrorie [on behalf of Arthritis Care in Scotland] calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to review its policy in relation to traffic calming measures, such as road humps and road cushions, in order to ensure that the impact on disabled users and the elderly is adequately addressed.

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.

See appended documentation.

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 ............................................. 17/4/2005 .............................................

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
Petition PE 840

The Public Petitions Committee,

Dear Sir/Madam,

In reply to the responses received by the Petitions Committee regarding Petition PE 840, I would like to make the following points:

1) Submission from J. McCaig, Enterprise, Transport and Life Long Learning.

The research carried out by the Transport Research Laboratory failed to include those with health problems, pregnant mothers and the disabled in their research.

At one British college students in wheelchairs have to be pushed over splay cushions between sites as pavements are too narrow.

2) Michael M. McDonnell, Scottish Road Safety Campaign.

"The local authority must... make the decision which will bring the greatest benefit to the whole community, even if this apparently disadvantages some members of the community."

Is this fair to pregnant mothers, the frail, the elderly and those with medical conditions and handicaps?

These devices cause pain and discomfort however..."
3. The Scottish Ambulance Service states that they are not consulted enough regarding traffic calming measures and that these measures can affect their ability to reach patients with life-threatening conditions within, on average, 8 minutes.

4. Mobility and Access, Capability Scotland and the Disability Rights Commission all concur that speed humps and cushions can cause problems and pain for those with medical conditions and disabilities. The Disability Rights Commission point out that after December 2006 Scottish councils may need to ensure that the design of traffic calming measures enables them to fulfill their function and meet the needs of disabled road users.

I have enclosed photocopies of a BBC website which recorded responses from members of the public both in Britain and abroad on this topic. The BBC received numerous complaints from those with health problems and also pregnant mothers.

Also enclosed are photographs of humps and cushions covered in snow for you to inspect as many drivers and cyclists have encountered problems with hidden humps and cushions.

To conclude, I hope that the Scottish Petitions Committee will act favourably to improve the quality of life of those affected by driving over speed humps and cushions, most especially...
As it is a nationwide problem.

Yours faithfully.
Feedback from the BBC's website regarding a feature run on speed humps and cushions.

Paragraphs marked at the edge indicate distress caused to people with disabilities and pregnant mothers.
Campaign to end speed bump 'pain'

MSPs have called for more research into the use of speed bumps after hearing complaints about the discomfort caused to chronic pain sufferers.

Disability rights campaigner Judith McCorrie, from Fife, wants humps removed and said she and many others experienced pain driving over them.

She launched a petition demanding that Fife Council replace its speed bumps. The council has defended its strategy.

Holyrood's petitions committee heard the issue on its visit to Dunfermline.

She believes that the use of speed bumps is a form of discrimination against disabled people and has called for the use of other traffic calming measures.

Her petition calls on the council to stop using the humps as its default means of slowing down traffic.

"The problem is that when you actually go over the speed humps they always cause a jolt and for people with various disabilities and chronic pain conditions and other medical conditions it is obviously extremely painful," she said.

"As so many speed humps and speed cushions are being installed throughout Scotland it makes life very difficult.

"A lot of people with disabilities are having to avoid certain roads and areas just because of the pain experience," she said.

She said the report which was quoted to justify the use of speed bumps recognised that people with a mobility impairment could suffer extreme discomfort and pain.

Ms McCorrie said she hoped her petition had raised
awareness of the problem.

Bob McLellan, Fife Council’s
director of transport services,
said it had carried out a
number of traffic calming
schemes using a range of different measures, including
speed bumps and speed cushions.

He said the decision on which measures to use was based on
the individual site and the response to local consultation.

"If vehicles are travelling at appropriate speeds within the
20mph area then no discernible discomfort should be
afforded to the vehicle user or passengers," he said.

"These speed reduction schemes are assessed before, during
and after implementation and results have already shown in
many instances a reduction in speed and accidents."

We asked for your views and experiences of speed
bumps and whether they are an effective traffic
calming and accident reduction measure. The following
represents the balance of opinion we received.

We have speed bumps on many roads and they can do a fair
amount of damage to my old car. We have speed bumps in
the central retail park in the town and they must be about 8-
10 inches high. I now avoid the retail park for that reason, so
the shops there have lost a customer and I wonder how
many others feel the same as myself?

**Gerry Carty, Falkirk, Scotland**

We can't please 100% of people 100% of the time. As long
as people can't be depended on to drive responsibly traffic
calming measures will be necessary. Instead of putting effort
into forcing councils to use more expensive calming
measures, effort should be directed into changing the
attitudes of people who necessitate the measures in the first
place.

**Menzies, Edinburgh**

I've driven over speed bumps at 20mph and I definitely feel
the bump. Some of the metal box-like ones you get in low
speed areas shake me about at 5mph. I can't imagine how
painful they must be for people with spinal problems. There
are no positive aspects to speed bumps - people driving over
them at 3mph just causes people to overtake past school
gates, which can hardly be considered a victory for pro-
safety groups. As for me, my next car's going to be the
biggest, best-sprung 4x4 I can find.

**James Ashwin, Oxford, England**

Speed bumps create a high amount of CO2. Every vehicle
must slow down before the bump. The driver will then press
down on the accelerator and cause a marked increase in
CO2. Just watch the exhausts of vehicles going over these bumps.

Charlie, Berwickshire

I agree - speed bumps cause more problems than they solve. I also have to take a different route to and from my house due to recently installed obstacles. In my view traffic calming measures should be agreed with the local community rather than the current method, where they are inflicted seemingly randomly and usually in the wrong places.

Pete, Kilmarnock

My uncle spent most of the festive period in bed and in extreme discomfort after pulling muscles and trapping a nerve going over a speed cushion. He was definitely going well under 20mph as he was having to negotiate cars parked at the side of the obstacles. Speed bumps that go the whole length of the road are far preferable, although a uniform height should be introduced, I find my car bottoms out quite frequently.

Lally, Aberdeen

I drive an ordinary small car, but going over a poorly built speed bump led to damage to the brake lines under my car which I only discovered when the car refused to stop at red lights. I was very lucky not to have a serious accident. Road narrowing and bends in the road work much better and don’t risk damage to cars or cause problems for ambulances and disabled people. It’s a no-brainer.

Susan, Glasgow

I drive a 4x4, and personally find that the faster I drive over them the smoother it is. So I never slow down for them...

Stephen McDermott, Renfrew, Scotland

While it is true that speed humps do make drivers slow down, the square ones as installed around here create an additional hazard. The way to minimise the pain is to line your car up straight "astride" the hump, but that means you are concentrating on doing that and not looking out for other hazards such as pedestrians. It will be interesting to see if the actual accident rate increases due to the humps, albeit possibly lower speed accidents.

Steve Paterson, Edinburgh, Scotland

I feel that where speed bumps are clearly not working, advisory speed camera signs should be placed. These should not say "Speed Checks", but "Average Speed Checks". This way drivers have no way of knowing between which two points their speed is assessed, therefore are forced to slow down for the duration.

Michael Gibson, West Byfleet, UK

I believe that Fife Council are wasting money on these speed cushions especially with the number of them in and around Fife. Yes, I see a need for speed calming around residential areas and also schools however speed bumps and cushions are creating problems for the standard driver. Some cars cannot go over these bumps and cushions and are damaging
the cars. Are Fife Council willing to pay for the damage? I can see problems if we get a really bad snow - how do snow ploughs clear the road with these bumps and cushions in the way? I quite agree with speed calming but surely there is a better way than mounds of asphalt in the middle of the carriageways.

*Jonathan Davies, Glenrothes, Fife*

As another disabled person with chronic back pain, I can understand and support this campaign. In order to drive to and from my house, I have to cross around 10 of these before reaching normal roads which can cause me severe pain even crossing them at 5mph. The situation is made worse when you meet a lorry or bus and have to go over the highest part of the speed cushion rather than the low parts. I understand the need for speed reduction measures but would prefer the smart collapsing type that only affect you if you cross them at faster than the designated speed. The current ones, due to their design, do not slow down vans or lorries who are often the worst offenders for speeding and I have found through experience that if you take the speed bump at speed, it has less of a jolt.

*James Black, Kirkcaldy, Scotland*

I love speed bumps, I actively speed up for them, mind you I do drive my mum's car. Other speed calming methods are much more effective, I don't tend to speed up for the chicanes, that would be reckless thoughtless and careless.

*Robert Wright, Edinburgh*

I think they are a good idea unless there is a better way, but I do feel some of them seem very high and as a fellow "sufferer", I also experience pain and discomfort going over these objects. I tend to brace myself each time we approach these, not always possible either.

*Elizabeth Lowrie, Glasgow, Scotland*

I live in a 30mph zone, but some of the speed bumps are so steep, that even at 10mph there is a discernable bump coming down the other side. I don't have a bad back yet, but there are so many bumps to go over every day, I'm sure time will wear down the delicate mechanism of the spine and I will become a sufferer. Will I be able to claim from the councils for criminal damage?

*John Graham, Edinburgh, Scotland*

Bob McLellan's comment that "If vehicles are travelling at appropriate speeds within the 20mph area then no discernible discomfort should be afforded to the vehicle user or passengers" is difficult to comprehend. Has he spoken to all the disabled people in Fife, let alone Scotland. I suggest he does so before making such sweeping statements. My wife has a chronic pelvic condition resulting in constant pain which is exacerbated by the likes of speed bumps, pot holes and uneven surfaces at ANY speed. Would he suggest that she gives up work and just sits on a comfy chair at home?

*Donald Marshall, Glasgow, Scotland*

The use of and provision of e.g. more zebra crossings, traffic
lights, roundabouts or changing priorities at certain junctions would have a far greater impact. Also get the police to use speed cameras on roads where there are speed problems as a deterrent - not the easy catch areas.

Steve Cowey, Dunfermline, Fife

English regions are removing bumps due to the problems caused - why do we have to continue down this route regardless? They don't work and the sooner this is recognised the better - the results quoted are in a few areas only and in the absence of any other attempted measures.

Deil, Edinburgh

I don't see how speed humps provide any means of accident reduction. Anyone driving over a road ruined by such measures will know that you are concentrating on the speed bumps, not what is happening around. I have seen 2 children knocked off bikes at these speed humps and put this solely down to the driver focusing on the bumps. They should all be removed.

Kevin Smith, Chandlers Ford, Hampshire

Money is being wasted on speed bumps, where it should be spent on fixing terrible roads full of potholes. Speed bumps also speed up wear and tear of cars as the suspension is not built to deal with them, no matter how slow you go. Also so many streets are blocked off which increases congestion on main roads.

Munro Stewart, Dundee, Tayside

If people are suffering pain when going over bumps, maybe they should slow down. This seems another crazy law from the do-gooders...

Angus, Clacton

I am strongly in favour of all the traffic calming measures that can be dreamt up. However, speed bumps damaged the older of my two cars yet my brand new saloon doesn't even notice them. There are other measures, which are quieter, more comfortable for people like Ms McCorrie and just as effective if not more so.

Francis Smith, Rouen, France

Both my wife and I suffer from back pain and have to take a particular route home to avoid speed bumps on our estate - they were installed without any public consultation several years ago, and it has made getting around more difficult. It really annoys me when they're fitted on a 30mph road - you have to reduce your speed to 5-10mph to navigate them safely - this must also put lives at risk and make it hard for ambulance drivers/paramedics to care for patients.

Colin Wilson, Liverpool, UK

I agree. Whilst I was pregnant last year I found I suffered a lot of discomfort every time we went over speed humps, as a result we often took a different longer route as I couldn't bear it. I agree that what they do is valuable but some speed humps do seem excessive and even at 20mph they cause a severe jolt.
Debbie Bissell, Lichfield, UK

My dad is a taxi driver and he says that the speed bumps seriously damage his vehicle; not because he goes excessively fast but because there are so many of them. He spends the whole day driving and may go over hundreds in one day. This is not the best way to slow traffic and in fact some speed bumps actually force you to come to almost a complete stop because they are so severe. This in itself must be an accident risk. It is the typical case of punishing all for the few.

Dean Hall, Newcastle

The speed bump in our street has caused people to get stuck on the hill during bad snow. Last year and the year before some people couldn’t get out of the street as one of the humps which is very steep is right at the brow of an already steep hill. We contacted the council about it and they didn’t seem to care.

Eoghann, Livingston

At last, someone has complained officially. I have a very bad neck and those bumps are forever jolting it, however slowly one drives, especially on unfamiliar roads where one is not aware of these horrors’ presence. I appreciate they are there to stop the joyriders but as always it’s the few that ruin it for the majority.

SMartin, UK

"If vehicles are travelling at appropriate speeds within the 20mph area then no discernible discomfort should be afforded to the vehicle user or passengers." Where does Mr McLellan get these findings from? I think I’d like to see some evidence.

Sean Curran, Penicuik, Midlothian

We have “traffic calming” bumps installed on our road. It is a total waste of time and money; there has never been a problem with speeding cars in the area nor is there a school nearby. If the money was spent on public transport maybe we would not need a traffic calming area.

Nigel, Edinburgh

Here’s why I think speed bumps are a disaster - it’s the nanny state gone mad. They are meant to save children’s lives and improve road safety, but it’s a lazy way to do it. Rather than encouraging schools and parents to teach their kids how to get around town safely, councils put speed bumps all over town and damage cars, cause chronic injuries to bus and taxi drivers and disabled people. In my view, this does not encourage individuals to take any personal responsibility for taking care of themselves when out and about. In the long term, people will get lazy and careless, stop thinking about taking care when crossing roads and probably will put themselves at risk of greater accidents in the future. Especially when kids go abroad on holiday to places that don’t yet have traffic bumps everywhere, they will probably be surprised to find they have to actually think for themselves and that the council has not produced a risk-
free environment for them to live in. You can't create a risk
free environment, so I don't know why nanny-councils bother
trying.

**David, Edinburgh**

Speed bumps may be effective for traffic calming but are
completely useless for people with neck and back problems.
My wife and I have to avoid such roads because no matter
how slow we go over these bumps they still cause pain. All
councils should consider alternatives.

**Brian Doncaster, Lincoln, England**

I think they would be better off putting the tarmac in the
potholes rather than creating humps. Maybe leaving lots of
holes is a cheaper alternative to humps - certainly seems like
it round here.

**Mark, Ballymena, County Antrim**

Speed bumps can be effective in some cases but the damage
caued to cars travelling at 10mph on certain roads in Paisley
is a disgrace.

**A Campbell, Paisley, Scotland**

The problem I find with speed bumps is that they are badly
designed. They should be profiled correctly to prevent
discomfort inside a vehicle travelling at the appropriate speed
for the road. In reality, they are always far too vicious with
the result that vehicles either throw their occupants around
or are driven in a stop-start fashion between bumps. This
latter is dangerous as drivers have their attention on the
bumps rather than on possible hazards in the road. It also
makes a road noisy for residents with the continual
acceleration and braking. So come on, you councils, get an
expert in who knows how to correctly design the profiles.
Better still, use other measures in place of bumps.

**Colin, Wrexham, Wales**

Our roads are dangerous enough at the best of times, so why
do councils add extra hazards to the mix? It should be
pointed out that speed bumps are potentially dangerous for
motorcycle/scooter riders. It is not a pleasant experience to
hit an unexpected speed bump when driving, but try the
same thing when on a 2 wheeler.

**Stuart, Dumbarton, Scotland**

Ever since "speed cushions" were installed in our street there
has been a spate of wing mirrors being "dented" and
knocked off residents' cars, plus other minor damage, as
drivers try to avoid going over the bumps directly and steer
too close to the parked cars. Instead of making the road
"safer" they've made it even less safe - some bigger cars
take the bumps as fast as ever, other cars steer around
them, trucks drive down the white line in the centre of the
street at full speed.

**Jette Goldie, Edinburgh, Scotland**

As much as speed bumps annoy me, they serve a purpose,
and that purpose is to protect pedestrians, not to enrage
people with disabilities.
Sarah-Jane Hall, Glasgow, UK

I requested a full width bump from Fife Council after a number of requests for speed reduction measures, including camera vans, failed to reduce drivers and motorcyclists flying up past a children's park in excess of 60mph. If you go over them slowly there is not a bump.

Paul McGowan, Lochgelly, Fife

Speed bumps - what a waste of money. They do nothing to slow those drivers who habitually drive at excess speed.

Dave Cameron, Newport Wales

I am from Fife and I hate the fact that my local authority has wasted so much money on putting these stupid speed bumps all over the roads, personally I think they are likely to increase accidents and dangerous driving as people drive along the middle of the road to lessen the effect of the bump, also the traffic "calming" measure of those silly islands on the one side of the road are extremely dangerous as people speed up to overtake it before the cars on the other side of the road reach it, it is a matter of time before there is a big crash because of this on Fife's roads. I completely agree with Ms McCorrie's point that the fact disabled people avoid these roads because of pain caused by speed bumps is discrimination; in fact, even for people without a disability such as myself, travelling over speed bumps does cause unpleasant jerks and jolts (and that is at 20mph, so what Bob McLellan says is absolute rubbish) I feel angered that Fife Council obviously has too much money in its transport budget and feels the need to waste it on these pointless measures that do not work, rather than reallocate the money to areas requiring more attention.

Jennifer, Fife, Scotland

Bob McLellan, Fife Council’s director of transport services, must be travelling in a 4X4 or a top of the range car.

R Carpenter, Glasgow

As a resident in a street covered by a 20mph restriction but without the accursed bumps, I have to say I have seen absolutely no reduction in speeds: if anything, some drivers seem to go faster, especially those driving buses apparently trying to make up for the time lost over the bumps in the adjacent streets.

Colin Nicholson, Markinch, UK

Speed bumps may reduce vehicle speeds but only in the immediate vicinity of the speed bumps rendering them mostly ineffective. They have however numerous downsides aside from those mentioned in this article. Vehicle emissions are greatly increased due to braking and acceleration. Noise levels are increased. They present a potential hazard to cyclists and motorcyclists. They increase wear in vehicle suspension components (they are after all an inverted pothole). They can also increase the response time for the emergency services.

Rachael, Edinburgh

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/4661438.stm

01/02/2006
In the vicinity of schools, some form of speed reduction is necessary but this may not need to be a speed bump. On other roads unless there has been an issue with speeding and/or a high accident rate I do not see the need. Yes it does slow the traffic down however there are places where a max of 30mph will keeping traffic moving efficiently. For some roads I would like to see the Risk Assessment justifying the need for speed bumps. With respect to construction of speed bumps, some are not continuous across the roads, this create problems with traffic as there try to drive over and around bumps with parked cars in the road.

*Fred McCain, Edinburgh*

Bob McLellan’s comments are absolute rubbish. No matter the speed, those of us who have spinal problems do suffer pain. In addition I believe that local authorities will end up paying huge compensation bills longer-term for damage to vehicles as, regardless of speed, cars were never designed for constant driving over speed bumps.

*Ian Crawford, Hamilton, Lanarkshire*

I agree. I live in Shawlands in Glasgow and some of the speed bumps round here are disgraceful. There are massive ones situated at junctions and several of them are crumbling away meaning you can only go over them at a snails pace or else you run the risk of bottoming out on them or catching your bumper on them due to their uneven height.

*Bob, Glasgow*

Break a leg and go over a speed bump. Even a minor break becomes absolute agony. I hate to think what it would be like for a chronic pain sufferer. No one disputes the reduction in speed and accidents. Just the necessity for speed bumps.

*Jon Lowbridge, Aberdeen*

I drive a Reliant 3 wheeler and have to crawl in 1st gear and at walking pace over many speed humps; the ones in my street are flat-topped pyramids that are especially bad. It is very dangerous to hit them at anywhere near 20 mph. They also have to be approached absolute centre to avoid my car being shaken violently from side-to-side. They have been responsible for many traffic jams including the local bus service, which I have heard has threatened to withdraw from the route because of the delays and difficulties associated with the speed humps. Conversely my street used to be a boy racer racetrack and since the speed humps were installed they have gone elsewhere.

*James Smith, Dunipace Scotland*

It has always baffled me that councils feel that they should put obstacles on roads which were created for the specific purpose of conveying traffic. Surely, the tried and tested method of dealing with speeding is by way of “Safety Camera Units” (a misnomer if ever I heard one!). I note that Bob McLellan defends the practice on the basis that drivers should be travelling at appropriate speeds “within the 20mph area”. If they were doing so, the speed bumps would be pointless! I would also be interested to learn whether Fife only has bumps within 20mph areas as there is certainly no such
restriction in Aberdeen where the bumps have been on 30mph roads for many years. Aside from being potentially damaging to people with disabilities, the bumps are also instrumental in damaging vehicle parts such as exhausts, tyres and shock absorbers; add to vehicle emissions and waste fuel (try to convince me that they have seen any driver - regardless of how careful - negotiate a bump without the use of brake and accelerator); are unsightly when not properly maintained: downright dangerous when not overly visible in the dark or when covered by snow and costly to install and upkeep. Other than these few minor drawbacks, I think the councils are totally justified in their use.

**Peter Yule, Aberdeen, Scotland**

What next?! Traffic signals to be changed because they discriminate against colour blind people?? If you go over a speed bump correctly - and slowly enough, you don't feel them - God forbid to think what speed you must have to be doing them to experience such discomfort.

**Stacey Lee, Aberdeen, Scotland**

I thought the council would have used the material for the speed bumps to fill the holes in the road in the 1st place. I did not think you would have been able to drive fast given the current condition of the roads.

**Alan Bain, Edinburgh**

My local council also has many speed bumps in place all over our area and is due to increase the number of these yet again. There are many other options available but the council opts for the cheaper and unpleasant type. We often take alternative routes to avoid them and my mother in law was ill for 2-3 months after a bus she was travelling in went over a bump too fast, she and her husband almost landed on the bus floor!! These bumps must be removed!!

**Mrs Pauline Roberts, Knockentiber, Near Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire**

Speed bumps do not work, since the Formula 1 wannabees (and taxi drivers) floor the accelerator after crossing the bump. Traffic islands are far more effective as they give the impression of the road narrowing.

**Neil Small, East Kilbride, Scotland**

All speed bumps do, apart from causing pain to those with disabilities, is to increase the likelihood of road rage. A much better answer is provided by those speed indicators which flash 'slow down' to those exceeding the speed limit. They work for me.

**Nicholas Lee, Windsor, England**

I totally agree with speed bumps. If you go over them slowly you experience no discomfort. They are required as too many people fail to take into consideration the risk they put others at with their speed. In my local area, very close to a school, we have recently had them installed and they work. Before these were put in there was a very real danger to the children at the school. The fact that the speed bumps jolt the car is the whole point behind them. You can go over them
too fast and cause damage to the car or the driver can experience the jolt too, but quite frankly it is the car drivers own fault for failing to drive with due care and attention. Everyone knows that the law states you must drive with due care and attention so why then would someone be silly enough to complain when they are forced, by speed bumps, to do just that?

I would much rather people learned a painful lesson in their car about speeding than a child injured.

**Gill Faichney, Glenrothes, Fife**

I feel that the use of traffic 'calming' generally has got out of hand. Councils seem obsessed with placing obstacles on the road rather than maintaining them properly. That said, correctly placed speed bumps are still better than these dangerous traffic islands which reduce the road to one lane so that drivers have to give way - or have a head on collision! Now THAT'S insane.

**David Lawrence, Kirkcaldy, Scotland**

Speed humps are particularly ineffective in that they just entice drivers to speed up between them then slow right down when they get to the hump. The ONLY way that speed will be controlled is by electronically ensuring that the vehicle is not able to exceed the speed limit for longer than 10 seconds in every minute. The technology is there now - GPS and most cars are now electronic ignition/diesel electronically controlled - it is only a matter of time before this is incorporated as another safety feature in all car engine management systems.

**Nick, N Yorks**

I live in the city centre of Edinburgh and our area has just been under attack from a surge of new speed bumps. Being heavily pregnant I am suffering a lot of pain when driving over the bumps no matter how much the car slows down. I know that if I go past my due date all I will have to do is drive over a few speed bumps to set things off!! I do believe that speed bumps are needed to stop people speeding however, in our area, they have put in new ones that make no sense at all i.e. before turning into a junction/new road. Maybe the council should be concentrating on filling in the many potholes before adding new bumps to the roads.

**Carol Paterson, Edinburgh, Lothians**

The people complaining about jolting over speed bumps will be the same people who haven't grasped the concept of slowing down going over them. That's what they are for! Go over them at 15 or 20mph and there is no jolting.

**David Young, Kirkcaldy Fife**

I wouldn't agree that speed humps are discriminatory against the disabled, in that they can cause problems for all other road users. Poorly constructed speed humps can cause not only damage to the spine but additional damage to the suspension and/or undercarriage of a vehicle, I have to avoid certain roads in my area for fear of being 'beached'. Also, with all the recent environmental concerns it seems foolish to
make drivers slow down and speed up needlessly every few hundred feet. There are other less obtrusive ways of calming traffic and I seriously think that local government should look into them before ploughing our money into wasteful projects.

**Matt, Milngavie, Scotland**

I think there should be far less use of speed bumps and greater thought given to the design of alternative traffic speed reduction measures. My daughter recently suffered a broken arm and she found very painful the jolting caused by going over speed bumps (even at very slow speeds). I therefore have every sympathy for people who have a long term problem.

**Sheenagh Adams, Linlithgow, Scotland**

It’s even worse in Edinburgh with the council using speed bumps as a shortcut instead of having to change the speed limit in areas. Speed bumps are being erected on some main routes in 30mph zones forcing drivers to slow well below the limit to prevent damage to their cars. Even at less than 20mph there is a heavy thud as you cross some. If the council wants people to drive slower why not just drop the speed limit on the road instead, surely cheaper to stick up a couple of new signs instead of speed bumps every hundred yards as well.

**Stuart, Edinburgh**

I think alternative calming measures should be used. Where I stay one of the reasons they put speed bumps in place was because my mate’s cousins was killed by a bus, but the buses can drive right over the bumps, makes no sense at all.

**James Davie, Glasgow, Scotland**
ROUGH RIDE: Speed bumps such as these ones on Melville Street, are said to damage cars' suspension.

Picture: Callum Bennett

City speed bump review looks at damage to cars and drivers

ANDREW PICKEN AND STEWART COOPER

A REVIEW of the city's speed bumps has been ordered to see how much damage they are doing to drivers' cars and health.

Officials will assess all of the traffic calming measures installed since May 2003 to see if they meet national standards.

The review will also identify the number of claims for injury or damages from drivers or passengers as a result of driving over the city's speed bumps.

Garage owners today reported a rise in the number of suspension repairs to cars in the last three years, which they said was down to the growing number of speed bumps in the city.

Opposition councillors called for the review after complaints from constituents.

Lib Dem Newington councillor Fred Mackintosh said: "We are worried about quality control.

"The council has spent a lot of money on traffic claiming measures over the last few years and it is vital that we get it right."

Around one in ten speed bumps installed in the city last year failed inspections for being too steep.

The council, which is rolling out 34 separate schemes to tackle speeding across Edinburgh, is replacing nearly 100 bumps which cost an estimated £150,000 to lay in five residential areas after they failed quality tests.
The main problem is the gradient of square "speed cushions" introduced to enforce 20mph zones near schools.

In one of the most controversial areas, 39 speed cushions were installed on Duddingston Road but every single cushion was too steep for vehicles.

Keith Elgin, of Keith Elgin Motor Engineers on Canaan Lane, said he had noticed a considerable increase in the number of suspension repairs his firm makes.

He said: "What is really surprising is that new cars coming in for their first MoT are suffering from the tell-tale signs of the damage caused by the speed bumps."

Tom Neil, owner of the Hermitage Garage on Restalrig Road, said: "We do a lot of MoTs and there have been a lot of broken springs in cars, which is definitely on the increase. I would have to say lots of potholes and speed bumps are a contributory factor.

"Today, we had a new car in which has cracked its sump going over a speed bump, which has cost £100 to repair."

Fairmilehead Tory councillor Elaine Aitken called for the council review after being inundated with e-mails, letters and phone-calls from constituents about the speed bumps around Buckstone Primary School.

She said: "I think everyone agrees that child safety is paramount but I think the council has got it wrong with a lot of the speed cushions already installed.

"In Buckstone the cushions are all around the estate leading up to the primary school and they have caused people suffering with back pain a lot of discomfort."

Director of city development Andrew Holmes said: "20mph zones have played an important role in improving the safety on Edinburgh roads.

"Speed humps are built to specifications under Scottish laws. They are checked by contractors and ourselves. On occasion, we have found contractors have erred on specifications but these have been immediately corrected at the contractor's expense."

This article: http://news.scotsman.com/index.cfm?id=302242006

Last updated: 27-Feb-06 14:01 GMT
News In Brief

Boy in blue rescues the lady in white
A BLUSHING bride got to her wedding in the "nick" of time after her vintage car broke down.
more »

LIFE FOR RUNNING A LIFE
A GOOD Samaritan was left brain damaged after his head was repeatedly stomped on during a savage attack.
more »

Son accused of killing his father
A TEENAGER appeared in court today charged with killing his father.
more »

I just want to help other kids like me
COURAGEOUS schoolboy Darren Johnson is raising hundreds of pounds to save the lives of children struck.
more »

Cleaning the streets of killer drugs
DRUGS worth more than £1.2million have been seized by police as evil dealers are being driven out.
more »

Fat-busters for city schools
A FAT-BUSTERS food squad is being drafted into schools as it was revealed that more than a quarter... more »

STABBED TO DEATH
A MURDER inquiry is under way after a dad was stabbed to death at his home in a

HUMPS CHUMPS
BUNGLING council staff responsible for the city's parking fines fiasco installed 2,000 speed bumps illegally, it was claimed today.
The mistakes - which could cost the city millions - have been uncovered during the inquiry into the mess that saw council bosses refund thousands of parking tickets.

Chief executive Ged Fitzgerald admitted in a letter to campaigners that orders to make 20mph zones had not been in place.

Metric martyr Neil Herron, who received the letter, and Captain David Green, who first complained about the humps 10 years ago, said there had to be a zone legally in place for speed humps to be installed.

Without the order, Captain Green said the humps installed before 1996 should be classed as an obstruction in the highway - an offence under the Road Traffic Act.

Opposition councillors called for heads to roll over the mess.

Council bosses said they were resolving problems - following the review of the decentralised parking enforcement (DPE) - but would not comment further.

In his letter, Mr Fitzgerald says: "It is evident several of the same weaknesses identified in the review have contributed to the failure to make the 20mph zone orders.

"It is also apparent that decisions of previous chief officers not to retrospectively seek to regularise those road humps installed prior to 1996 has created a difficult legacy that needs to be resolved."

Captain Green, 85, of Cairnside, East Herrington, said: "In 1996, they put a load of humps in and 20mph zones and they never had the authority to do it.

"These are illegal and it could cost millions of pounds to rectify. In the initial phase, up to 1996, there was about 2,000 humps and it costs about £1,000 to put each one in.

"It's a chaotic situation - and now they're in line for prosecution for putting dangerous obstructions on the highway."

The claims come after Mr Herron and retired manner Captain Green exposed missing traffic orders that led to the council refunding parking tickets.

Sunderland Council is putting in place new traffic orders governing marked on-street parking in the city, after paying back £34,000 in fines.

A spokesman said: "We are in the process of regularising procedural issues in relation to 20 mph zones and road humps in order to ensure we continue to enjoy significant road safety benefits which these measures have produced in the city."

Conservative leader on Sunderland Council, Peter Wood, said: "The longer this goes on, the more problems are identified and the more it becomes clear that what has been opened is a can of worms.

"Whilst I'm satisfied with the actions the chief executive has taken, everything underlines the incompetence in the old environment department, which is still there in the new directorate of development and regeneration.

"That has to be rooted out. You can't leave in place people who have delivered that level of service."

http://www.sunderlandtoday.co.uk/ViewArticle2.aspx?SectionID=1107&ArticleID=13... 15/03/2006
Public Petitions Committee,
The Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh,
EH99 1SP

Dear Sirs,

"Out-of-Hours" Medical Services in Braemar

Petition on behalf of Braemar Community Council calling for the Scottish Parliament to investigate the merits of proposed new arrangements for "Out-of-Hours" Medical Services in remote rural communities such as Braemar.

Yours faithfully

John Macpherson
Chairman
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*

John Alexander MacPherson, Chairman, Killin Community Council

### 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 considers and debates the implications and shortcomings arising in rural areas following the introduction of NHS 24 services. In particular with reference to ambulance cover and time scales involved in getting medical assistance to patients in these areas. Additional information is appended to the petition.*

### 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.

Numerous joint meetings with representatives from Forth Valley Health Board, Chief Executive and others, Scottish Ambulance Service Area managers, Dr S Jackson MSP, local GPs Dr C Holden and others, District Nurses and neighbouring Community Council representatives.

Request to speak:

All petitioners are given the opportunity to present their petition before the Public Petitions Committee. The Convener will then make a decision based on a number of factors including the content of the petition and the written information provided by the petitioner as to whether a brief statement from the petitioner would be useful in facilitating the Committee’s consideration of a petition.

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

Yes *

*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: 20th January 2005

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
Additional information supporting this petition.

This petition although submitted by the Chairman of Killin Community Council, has the support of the neighbouring Community Councils of Strathfillan, St Fillans, Lochearnhead, Balquhidder Strathyre, and Callander. With the exception of St Fillans, which is in the western area of Perth & Kinross Council, all the other areas are situated in the rural northwest area of Stirlingshire.

Reasons for submitting this petition.

1. Despite a number of meetings with all the agencies involved, it is our opinion that no progress is being made in an effort to ensure a safe medical provision in the rural areas. We all feel very frustrated and discouraged that despite our best endeavours no one appears to be listening to the fears we are expressing. It is our honest belief that if the issue is not properly addressed then a tragedy could occur. We are conscious that we are not unique in our concerns, we are aware that other rural areas in Scotland have similar problems.

2. NHS 24. I have received a number of complaints regarding unfortunate experiences which members of the public have experienced, including one where on calling NHS 24 about a person with severe stomach pains, they were informed that all nurse advisors were engaged, but would call back when free. After a further two phone calls to NHS 24 the caller after three hours resorted to calling 999, whereupon an ambulance transferred the patient to Stirling Royal Infirmary. There are other instances, which can be elaborated on verbally, if required, always bearing in mind patient confidentiality.

3. At the present time an arrangement is in place between the Health Board and local GPs whereby out of hours (OOH) cover is still provided by the local GPs, however some operators at the call centre appear to be unaware of this, and on one occasion they informed a caller that the nearest available Dr on call was located at Glasgow. We have been told that this arrangement will cease as from March 31st 2005. The understanding given to us was that from December 2004, the local GPs would work alongside paramedics, till March 2005. To date this has not happened, because there are not sufficient paramedics available to implement this arrangement.

4. After 31st March, the nearest OOH Dr on call will be based in Stirling, which means a distance of 50 to 60 miles away from the most outlying areas, and an average of 40+ miles from the centre of the rural area. It is felt that this is not satisfactory, and together with the proposed ambulance cover etc, which is referred to later in this submission, will be unsafe. There is also now no OOH Nurse/Midwifery service in the area.

5. It should also be pointed out that at present Killin GPs are responsible for dispensing medication in their area, as the only dispensing chemists are located at Callander, some considerable distance from the more remote rural areas.

6. Ambulance Service. At present this has been provided by two double-crewed ambulances, one based in Callander, and one also double crewed at Killin. Although the Killin crews were not full time, they were on call over the full 24 hours. The new proposals are that ambulance staff at Killin will be put on a full time basis. However this has not improved anything, as we are informed by the ambulance service that cover will now consist of one double-crewed ambulance (A & E) and one rapid Response Unit (RRU) manned by one paramedic for the
whole north west area including Callander. The RRU vehicle is not capable of conveying patients. It is our considered opinion, that these proposals are unacceptable, bearing in mind that around four to five thousand people are affected plus a vast geographical area. The proposals also mean that whereas there were four personnel on duty during normal working hours, this has now been reduced to three, hardly an improvement in the service.

7 At present, if a local GP calls out an ambulance, once the ambulance leaves the area with the patient, we still have the local GPs available for any further calls. With the new system that will not be the case, a Dr would have to attend from Stirling or the one locally based Paramedic if not otherwise engaged. In the event of a Paramedic responding to a call, which subsequently requires hospitalisation, this will result in a further delay in the time taken to get that patient to hospital, as the Paramedic will then have to wait for an A & E ambulance to arrive to transport the patient.

8 Concern has also been expressed with regards to OOH care for expectant and mothers of young families, bearing in mind the fact that no nursing or midwifery cover is available OOHs.

Whilst appreciating the difficulties encountered in providing a safe and reliable health service to all, we feel that for whatever reason, we are being offered a second class service, which I would reiterate we believe to be unsafe, and could lead to a tragedy occurring.

In light of the foregoing I ask the Committee to take steps to have the matter fully discussed in Parliament, with a view to a solution being found, and peoples minds put at rest.

Attached is some correspondence, and minutes of meetings, which have taken place. This may assist in your understanding of our concerns, which are presented in this petition.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details of principal petitioner:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr W.D.R. Chalmers, The OldSchoolhouse, Mennock, Sanquhar, Dumfries DG4 6HS

on behalf of The Mid and Upper Nithsdale Association of Community Councils

Contact Tel: 01659 58106  E.mail : rennie.chalmers@btinternet.com

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text of petition:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The petition should clearly state what action the petitioner wishes the Parliament to take in no more than 5 lines of text, e.g.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 urges.... The Scottish Executive to ensure that NHS Services in Rural Areas such as Mid and Upper Nithsdale are adequate, equitable and ' acceptable ' as required by the NHS Reform [Scotland] Act 2004, especially in relation to Out of Hours Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional information:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

MSP's Alex Fergusson and David Mundell have together with Representatives from Mid and Upper Nithsdale Association of Community Councils [MUNACC] met with John Burns CEO of D&G Health Board and Dr. Cameron Director of Medical Services and presented a stated case without achieving any resolution to the issues raised.

Accordingly,

This Petition has been endorsed by MUNACC by Minute of their Meeting on 16th February 2005

Request to speak:

All petitioners are given the opportunity to present their petition before the Public Petitions Committee. The Convener will then make a decision based on a number of factors including the content of the petition and the written information provided by the petitioner as to whether a brief statement from the petitioner would be useful in facilitating the Committee's consideration of a petition.

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

Yes

"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

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
Additional Information

1 From the date of inception of the out of hours service the media have reported numbers of serious incidents where there has been failure of the NHS triage service in rural areas including Dumfries and Galloway

Questions on relevant issues have been raised by MSP's in Parliament and by other Petitions. These incidents are evidenced by press reports on specific instances as well as by local anecdotal sources, in particular:

2 NHS 24 Out of Hours

2.1 Pho`ne line – provision not user friendly – frequently the caller patient has been told they would be 'phoned back' and this has sometimes taken up to – 5 hours

2.2 Ooh – no relevant Doctor other than based in Dumfries some – 20 miles – from the central area of Upper Nithsdale and – up to 40 miles – from remote areas – thus giving some 5 hours plus for medical attention to reach the patient. This is provided a Session Doctor is immediately available which may not be the case, and there is no appreciable delay elsewhere eg in 'phone[d] back'

2.3 Ambulance and Paramedic attendance can also involve delay because of ambulance working in an adjoining area to its base or its being unavailable for use due to single manning

3 This Petition has been endorsed, unanimously supported and Minuted by The Mid and Upper Nithsdale Association of Community Councils at their Meeting on 16th February 2005. A List of those Community Councils attending is appended. It has also been separately and unanimously approved by Kirkconnel Community Council and by Sanquhar & District Community Council of which latter the Petitioner is a Member.

4 Despite the raising of issues with Health Board Representatives during the periods of engagement no satisfactory progress was made, nor as indicated in the body of the Petition was there any outcome from Meeting with the Chief Executive and Medical Administrator of The Dumfries & Galloway Health Board

5 The provision of services to the rural and outlying areas of Mid and Upper Nithsdale have not been properly addressed and some tragedy will inevitably be the outcome.

Accordingly:

The Petitioner claims:

There is a 'prima facie' case that Scottish Ministers recognise that:

Under the statutory terms of Section 6 of The NHS Reform [Scotland] Act 2004 there is a failure to provide service to a standard which is 'acceptable' to them

AND
That the Scottish Ministers should direct NHS 24 and the Dumfries & Galloway Health Board to provide an acceptable service to the Rural Areas of Mid and Upper Nithsdale in consultation with the public as prescribed under Section 7 of the Act, taking into account the times required for delivery of essential services:

eg ..... Ambulance and Doctor attendance Out of Hours.

To fail to do so will not only prejudice life in a medical emergency but will result in an inequitable distribution of services to areas of multiple deprivation [SIMD] with specific health needs, and result in a 2-tier NHS Service viz-a-viz the Urban area of Dumfries and the Rural areas of Mid and Upper Nithsdale

Appendix:

Members of MUNACC attending Meeting on 16th February 2005

Ae Community Council
Carrobridge Community Council
Closeburn Community Council
Dunsecore Community Council
Keir Community Council
Kirkconnel & Kellogholm Community Council
Moniaive Community Council
Penpont Community Council
Sanquhar & District Community Council
Tynron Community Council
Dear Michael

CONSIDERATION OF PETITIONS PE776, PE814 AND PE826

Thank you for your letter of 7 March in which the Committee asked for the Executive’s views on the issues raised by the petitioner in his letter of 9 February 2006 which are still of concern to him.

Mr MacPherson’s concerns revolve around some of the information which the Scottish Ambulance Service provided to the Petitions Committee, but which it did not want made available publicly. I understand from the Official Report of the Committee’s meeting on 22 February that the Committee has already approached the Parliament’s legal department with this issue.

Officials have consulted colleagues within the Freedom of Information Unit in the Executive and have been advised that it would not be appropriate for us to comment on the processes used for the governance of evidence given to a Parliamentary Committee. I note however that the Committee approached the Scottish Ambulance Service again about whether it would allow the information to be released. I understand that the Scottish Ambulance Service has now released all of the information into the public domain and has written to the Committee to confirm that it has done so.

ANDY KERR
Dear Dr. Johnston,

Consideration of Petition PE814

Thank you for your letter of 7 March 2006 to Mary Newman, our Director of Operations asking whether it remained our position that the attachment to our response to this petition should not be made public.

Mary Newman is on holiday at present and I am responding on her and the Scottish Ambulance Service's behalf.

After having carefully considered your letter and the copy petition, we have decided in the interests of openness that the attachment can be made public.

Yours sincerely,

ROBERT PANTON
CORPORATE AFFAIRS MANAGER
20 April 2005

Dr James Johnston
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
Scottish Parliament
TG.01
Parliamentary Headquarters
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Dr Johnston

Thank you for your letter to Adrian Lucas, Chief Executive of the Scottish Ambulance Service, asking for comments on public petition no PE814, by John MacPherson on behalf of Killin Community Council.

This petition calls for the Scottish Parliament to consider and debate the implications for rural areas of the introduction on NHS24 services, particularly in relation to ambulance cover and timescales for getting medical assistance to patients in these areas.

The Chief Executive has asked me to reply as Director of Operations for the Scottish Ambulance Service. As you may know Mr Lucas was asked by the First Minister to serve on the NHS24 Review team, which has recently begun its review of a range of issues relating to NHS24 performance.

We would be grateful if you note that we do not wish the attachment to this submission to be made public.

Six years ago, a report by the National Audit Office to the Audit Committee of the Parliament called 'A Service For Life' recommended that the Scottish Ambulance Service introduce priority-based despatch procedures into the way it deployed its resources. We did so. A key implication of that recommendation was that where cases are considered not to be suitable for the despatch of ambulance services, a means is needed by which cases can be referred to NHS partners at any time of day or night. For this reason alone the Scottish Ambulance Service supports the concept of NHS24, just as we recognise that the health service must develop a means to meet public demand for a 24 hour direct service of advice and support.

The petition asks specific questions about the implications of NHS24 for rural areas in Scotland. We consider the implications for ambulance services in rural and urban areas to be the same in principle,
although clearly where travel considerations are concerned particular considerations apply about the availability of services and travel time.

The following issues arise relating to the demand for ambulance services - and, by implication, the availability of finite ambulance service resources - from the introduction of NHS24 and, latterly, its role in the organisation of unscheduled care services out of hours as a result of the introduction of the new GMS contract.

Because the role and geographical reach of NHS24 expanded during 2004/05, all figures given below are for the month of March 2005. Comparative figures specific to the Forth Valley Health Board area (including the Killin area) are not readily available.

The first issue arising for the Scottish Ambulance Service from the activities of NHS24 is the implications for the service of the broader role of NHS24 as a 24 hour advisory help-line. Referrals to the ambulance service by NHS24 may be made at any time in respect of patients phoning in for advice about conditions or symptoms which NHS24 considers should merit an emergency or urgent ambulance response. NHS24 use a risk-averse algorithmic system to support practitioner decisions about the best response to make to a caller’s concerns, which suggests that inevitably - and safely - some of the referrals made will not be judged appropriate with hindsight.

Retrospective clinical audit supports this conclusion: 25% of the emergency calls received by the ambulance service from NHS24 are not considered an appropriate referral at that level of priority. Although this inappropriate demand has implications for ambulance service cover and therefore for the speed of response overall, at the level of referrals received at present from NHS24 this is not a significant factor of itself in undermining ambulance resource availability.

During March 2005 the service was required to provide 34,516 emergency responses across Scotland. Of these 2,943 were concerned with emergency referrals from NHS24. Relying on the audit findings mentioned above, this suggests that 736 out of the 34,516 responses made during the month - i.e. just over 2% - were the result of an inappropriate referral from NHS24.

The second issue is the implication of new arrangements for the provision of unscheduled primary medical care out of hours. These arrangements have been planned and are managed by regional health boards, rather than by NHS24, but they have implications for NHS24 because of its role in referring those in need of unscheduled care out of hours to the new unscheduled care providers (which in some cases include ambulance service extended skills paramedics working with fellow primary care providers). Increasingly, ‘NHS24’ is used as a term of art for the totality of these arrangements.

We feel that it is too early to comment on the adequacy of the unscheduled care arrangements put in place out of hours by regional health boards. It is speculative to use demands on the ambulance service to judge public satisfaction with other services. That being said there is an obvious risk that where arrangements are found by the public to be inadequate, for whatever reason, self-referrals to the ambulance emergency service will increase and that will feed into demand on front-line services. As for NHS24, all emergency despatch centres in the ambulance service use a risk-averse algorithmic system to
support practitioner decisions about the best response to make to a caller’s concerns, which suggests that inevitably – and safely – some of the responses made will not be judged appropriate with hindsight.

There are seasonal trends in ambulance service demand, identified with the assistance of historical data, and it is possible to develop parameters whereby ‘unseasonable’ variance can be identified. Such variances have been identified over the last two months. We do not consider that it would be appropriate to assume that they are the result of the new out of hours arrangements or of the public’s experience of NHS24 without detailed further investigation. First, the number of emergency calls to the ambulance service from the public has been significantly higher throughout 2004/05 compared to 2003/04, but the number of identified emergency incidents – to which front-line services will have provided a response – has not shown as great an increase. Second, there are many other possible reasons for variance in demand on frontline services which would need to be discounted before determining the impact of a particular change to services in the NHS.

I hope that the Committee finds these comments of interest.

Yours sincerely

Mary Newman
Director of Operations
ANNEX A

IN CONFIDENCE: ADDENDUM TO SCOTTISH AMBULANCE SERVICE RESPONSE TO PETITION NO PE814

We note that the public petition is lodged on behalf of Killin Community Council. We can offer the following information specific to the Killin area.

In June 2004 Forth Valley Primary Care Operating Division (FVPCOD) asked East Central Division of the Scottish Ambulance Service if it could provide options that would see a development of the Ambulance Service’s capability in the Killin area. In addition to improving the delivery of Ambulance Services the development would also encompass a role for the Service in support of the delivery of Out of Hours Services. This would involve an additional five Paramedics being recruited specifically for rural Forth Valley who would undergo an appropriate programme of training and education that would allow them to effectively support the Out of Hours Service across a wide range of conditions. Over the following weeks, following consultation with Community Council Representatives and local GPs, the scope of the Paramedic role grew to encompass Minor Injury/Illness capability.

We understand this approach to the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) – which we are happy and competent to meet – followed a breakdown in negotiations between the Health Board and local GPs relating to the cost of the continued provision of GP services out of hours under the GMS contract. It has been stated openly by FVPCOD that, on examination of the proposals made, they felt options other than the current partnership with the SAS were neither affordable nor sustainable. Since this time relationships between the SAS management and the Killin GPs have been difficult and this has spilled over into attitudes displayed at consultation meetings for the new model.

In July 2004 a Public Consultation Meeting (organised by NHS Forth Valley) and a number of other meetings involving Community Council representatives and local GPs were held to address concerns raised by the Killin community. A strategy to overcome these was developed and led by FVPCOD. An extensive, and ongoing, programme of communication and consultation ensued to provide the Killin communities with reassurance, accurate and up to date information and, wherever possible, evidence to reduce their concerns. To date this has resulted in:

- 5 meetings of an “Implementation Group” involving SAS, FVPCOD, Killin GP’s, Community Council Reps. (these are currently held every two weeks).
- 1 meeting with the “Trossachs National Park Community Councils Group”.
- 2 meetings with the Killin GP’s.
- 1 Killin community “Open Day” involving the SAS staff who will deliver the service, SAS managers, FVPCOD managers.
- 1 meeting involving NHS Forth Valley, Killin Community Council, SAS, FVPCOD, local MPs/MSPs.
- An article placed in each of the last two editions of the “Killin News” (produced every 3 months) produced jointly by FVPCOD & SAS.
- 1 meeting of a “Clinical Risk” sub group of the Implementation Group (attended for the SAS by its Consultant Medical Director) with SAS, Killin GP’s, FVPCOD and Community Council representation.

It seems clear that members of the local community have had great difficulty in accepting the need for change within the Out of Hours Service. On several occasions they have openly asked why the change is required and why the Killin GPs cannot continue to provide a service. Although, from FVPCOD perspective, the issues of affordability and sustainability have been fully explained there is no clear evidence that they have been accepted and that reluctance to accept the new model (and the SAS in particular as an alternative provider) is diminishing. Additionally concerns about the adequacy of routine emergency ambulance services have been raised, with a number of questions asked about shift patterns and deployment practices.

Disappointingly for the Scottish Ambulance Service, the local Community Council Representatives have expressed mistrust in the SAS and a lack of confidence in the ability of the Service to deliver on its stated plans. Since agreeing at a late stage of preparations for new arrangements to provide an enhanced paramedic service, the SAS has had to recruit, select and train appropriate personnel against a limited availability of appropriate and accredited training courses. We think it fair to say that this process has taken longer than the local community and FVPCOD originally envisaged. We have kept NHS partners and the community fully informed of progress, and at the time of writing the relevant paramedics have been recruited, have completed the Minor Injury course at Queen Margaret College University and are developing their clinical portfolio before taking up their unscheduled care responsibilities in the community.

Scottish Ambulance Service
April 2005