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>
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<tr>
<th>Details of principal petitioner:</th>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Green – St Edmunds Primary</td>
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<th>Text of petition:</th>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
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<tr>
<td>Petition by Susan Green calling for the Scottish Parliament to consider and debate the inadequacy of the existing legislation for parental consultation over school closures.</td>
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<th>Additional information:</th>
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<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>
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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.

Jack McConnell, First Minister, Scottish Executive; Peter Peacock, Education Minister, Scottish Executive; Ronnie O’Connor, Director of Education, Glasgow City Council; Education Committee, Glasgow City Council; Johann Lamont MSP, Glasgow Pollok; Councillor Keith Baldassara; Councillor Willie O’Rourke; Councillor Iris Gibson; Councillor Josephine Dodds; Rosie Kane MSP; Lewis Macdonald, Deputy Transport and Planning Minister, Scottish Parliament; Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman; Councillor Steven Purcell

Petitioners appearing before the Committee
The Convener of the Committee may invite petitioners to appear before the Public Petitions Committee to speak in support of their petition. Such an invitation will only be made if the Convener considers this would be useful in facilitating the Committee’s consideration of the petition. It should be noted that due to the large volume of petitions it has to consider, the Committee is not able to invite all petitioners to appear before the Committee to speak in support of their petition.

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

I DO request to make a brief statement before the Committee □

I DO NOT request to make a brief statement before the Committee □

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 1/3/06 .................................................................

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
Consultation with parents on phase 4 pre-12 strategy
Glasgow City Council

This is a joint petition between St Edmunds primary school and Carnwadrick Primary. We are two schools which face closure now that the Glasgow City Council(GCC) have ratified Phase 4 of the pre-12 strategy. It should be noted that we have only met recently and independently felt that parents were inadequately treated during the recent consultation.

The consultation process does not open dialogue with parents but instead leaves them frustrated and angry. GCC informed all parents in a standard letter which was “Dear parent or guardian” with “date as postmark”. This set the stall for the whole process with not a care to our concerns or opinions. These letters could have been personalised and dated to at least show that GCC knew and were interested in the children concerned. However at least the proposal letters were posted to home addresses. By the time decision was finalised we were told via a letter in our children’s school bag. This may cover GCC legal obligations but does not open the process to debate. Parents have been led to believe that the decisions were taken prior to the proposal letters been sent out. Regulations on consultation should reflect the knowledge of parents and children within the closure process.

Both schools were invited to public meetings and again were left frustrated as to the purpose. The letter stated “to discuss the proposal”, the fact was that any question received a standard, “put it in your response sheet”. This is unacceptable because the meetings were our only direct contact with GCC and should have at least sent a representative who could give us the answers to genuine concerns. Again the process appeared as an obligation on their part and no effort was made to open a meaningful dialogue. None of the questions raised within the public meetings became part of the final response. Considering the fear of forms regulations should reflect the vunerable nature of both parents and children.
We later found out that children should have had a say in the response sheets. This was not explained or encouraged. In fact when questions were raised on the children's part in the process we were left with no answers. Many children at primary school age should have played a meaningful part in the process but instead were left out of the loop. The legal framework on school closures should offer clear knowledge to all parties on what part they play in the process.

Once parents submit their responses there is no reply from GCC to the issues raised. Education services produced a response to the consultation which summarised what they felt were the issues. This does not give parents an answer to their direct questions. Consultation is a two way process and a direct reply to every response would have eliminated a lot of the frustration and anger. In the case of GCC this would have been a gigantic task considering the amount of schools involved. Phase 4 pre-12 strategy should have considered this prior to proposing so many radical closures at once. Parents and children were left with no voice because GCC had too many enquiries. Regulation should ensure that everyone has a voice.

Both schools have different reasons to be concerned over these closures. We are not asking for you to look in to the decisions on closure but how these decisions were arrived at. Law should protect the vulnerable but regulations governing school closures appears at the moment to protect the strong.