The Committee will consider the following new petitions—

**PE1000** On behalf of All Saints Secondary School calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to investigate the health implications of cheaply available alcohol.

**PE996** Petition by Alan MacKinnon, on behalf of the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to review the preparedness of schools to deal with the consequences of nuclear accidents/incidents and to introduce guidelines for local authorities on how to deal with such emergencies.

**PE995** Petition by Robert Patterson calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to hold a public inquiry into the high number of drug related deaths in Scotland.

**PE998** Petition by Moria Lenehan, on behalf of New Fossils Grandparents Support Group, calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to establish a national framework to provide financial, respite, social work and educational support for grandparents, relatives and friends who are carers of children who no longer live with their natural parents.

**PE1006** Petition by Bob Dickie, on behalf of Clydebank Asbestos Group, calling on the Scottish parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to ensure that the current prescribing arrangements for mesothelioma sufferers under which Alimta is made available are continued.
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

C/o Sarah Richford

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

Petition on behalf of All Saints Secondary School calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to investigate the public health impact of cheaply available alcohol.

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.

Letter to MSP, Interview with local police, Interview with Glasgow City Council Representative, Meeting with Managers of Tesco (Springburn) and Asda (Robroyston), Interview Youth Worker (NGASS)

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**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 [X]
- 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:

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
Public Petitions Committee – a template for e-petitions

Should you wish to submit an e-petition allowing signatures to be gathered online on the Public Petitions Committee e-petitioner web pages please complete the template below. Before submitting your e-petition please consult the Guidance on submission of public petitions for advice on what is and is not admissible. 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.*

Alan MacKinnon
Chair
Scottish CND
15 Barrland Street
Glasgow
G41 1QH

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*

Petition by Alan MacKinnon, on behalf of the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to review the preparedness of schools to deal with the consequences of nuclear accidents/incidents and to introduce guidelines for local authorities on how to deal with such emergencies.

Period for gathering signatures:

*Please enter the closing date for gathering signatures on your petition, which we would usually recommend is a period of between 4-6 weeks*

Closing date:
Additional information:

Please enter any other information relating to the issues raised in your e-petition, including the reasons why the action requested is necessary. The text entered in this field should not exceed 2 pages. However, you may wish to provide further sources/links to background information.
Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting an e-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 MSPs. Details of those approached should be entered.

Comments to stimulate on-line discussion:

Please provide at least one comment to set the scene for an on-line discussion on the petition, not exceeding 10 lines of text.

Petitioners appearing before the Committee

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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.

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For advice on the content and wording of your e-petition please contact:

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

Note
Completed e-petition forms should also be sent to petitions@scottish.parliament.uk
Public Petitions Committee – a template for public petitions

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Robert Patterson

Text of petition:
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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

Petition by Robert Patterson calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to hold a public inquiry into the high number of drug related deaths in Scotland.

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.
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Contacted:- Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Councillor William McAllister

Petitioners appearing before the Committee

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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:

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Signature ....

Date ..................................................

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The Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5186 Fax: 0131 348 5088
e-mail: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk
Petition by Moria Lenahan, on behalf of New Fossils Grandparents Support Group, calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to establish a national framework to provide financial, respite, social work and educational support for grandparents, relatives and friends who are carers of children who no longer live with their natural parents.
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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

New Fossils Grandparents Support Group

Contact Details

Moria Lenehan
New Fossils Grandparents Support Group
C/o Community Work Team
Newlands Centre
871 Springfield Rd
Glasgow
G31 4HZ

Tel 565 0100

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

We ask that the Parliament introduce legislation to establish a national framework to support grandparents, relatives and friends who are the carers of children who can no longer live with their natural parents. This support must include realistic ongoing financial assistance. It must also include access to respite, social work and educational support services where required.
Additional information:
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In the last two years our group has had meetings and exchanged correspondence with MSPs Frank McAveety, Robert Brown, Donald Gorrie, Tommy Sheridan, Rosemary Byrne, and John Swinburne. We participated in the yet to be published Scot Exec/SWIA research undertaken by Prof. Jane Aldgate in 2004 and have been in discussions with Glasgow City Council on how to improve support services in the city.

Petitioners appearing before the Committee
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Signature ..........................................................

Date .......................................................... 5/9/06

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
We are a group of grandparent and relative carers who have taken on the responsibility of caring for our grandchildren as a result of our own children's addiction to drugs/alcohol or mental/physical health problems.

We are a growing and often hidden group of carers. Government must start to address our and our grandchildren's needs.

Some Facts

1. When the social workers arrived at Jo's home with her two grandchildren they only had the clothes they stood in. Jean had no toys, beds, bedding and little money. After six weeks Jean could not afford to buy an Electricity Power Card. She and the children would spend weekends in the dark sharing one bed. In desperation Jean sought assistance from a local charity.

2. Charlie and Janet are both retired and with social work approval took their eight-week-old grandchild direct from hospital rather than have her placed in care. They received no financial support for clothes, cot, toys, bedding....nothing. For seven months they struggled to claim child benefits and income support because of the “system” and had to use up much of their savings (at least they had some....many do not).

3. Sandra was in care herself as a child and was determined not to allow her grandchild’s way of life to begin the same way. Sandra cannot afford days out, decent trainers or holidays that her grandchild deserves. She worries that this will only increase the bullying her grandchild suffers because he lives with his “old granny”.

4. Ann took in her three grandchildren after many attempts to keep them with their mum. Ann gets some help from the local social work team, but the school holidays are a big pressure. Places in the few local clubs are difficult to secure. A couple of days a week during the holidays is all Ann really needs.

5. Marie and Willie have looked after their two nephews for three years. Marie would like to get a job but feels she does not have the energy or the time due to the pressures in the house. Willie finds it hard to hold down work and the boys are starting to get into bother. Marie becomes very depressed at times.

Can all this be right? Our experiences indicate that these situations are widespread across Scotland with grandparents denying themselves or relying on others to assist them in providing the love and care.
**More Facts**

It costs Councils £800 to £1200 per week to keep a child in care.

Councils pay foster carers up to £350 per week to look after vulnerable children.

The National Children’s Home charity pays its foster carers £24,000 per year.

Yet grandparents and relative carers in most areas of Scotland do not receive a penny towards the care of their vulnerable grandchildren. Indeed it costs them money.

---

**Scottish Executive**

We welcome the Scottish Executive’s comments that we are “highly regarded” and do “invaluable work”......but we need much more than words.

In April 2004 the Scottish Executive commissioned Professor Jane Aldgate to research the problem. We participated in this work and Professor Aldgate completed her report in late 2004. Despite repeated requests the Scottish Executive has not made the report public.....WHY?

We call on the Scottish Parliament to address this problem now.

Those in power must recognise the sacrifice grandparents and other relative carers make, including many in the later stages of life when they should be taking it easier. Let’s recognise the hardships many find themselves facing in trying to give their grandchildren the best start in life.

We recognise our responsibilities but Government must also assist us in caring for this group of vulnerable children.

---

**Who we are?**

We exist to campaign for, and provide mutual support to, grandparents and other relatives who are the main carers of children. There are various reasons why our members find themselves in this situation.

The mutual support that members gain from working and talking to others in a similar situation is very important to those involved in the group.

Most of our members live in the East End and Greater Easterhouse areas of Glasgow.

---

**Contact Details:**

The New Fossils  
c/o Community Work Team  
Newlands Centre  
871 Springfield Road  
Parkhead  
G31 4HZ  

Tel: 565 0100

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Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet.
10 October 2006

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

Dear Mr McGill

Petition No: PE998 New Fossils Grandparents Support Group

We note with interest the petition lodged by Moira Lenehan on behalf of the New Fossils Grandparents Support Group and we wish to support this petition on behalf of the Grandparents ‘Parenting Again’ groups which meets in Midlothian.

As grandparents ‘parenting again’ we are raising our grandchildren often in difficult circumstances. By meeting together we have identified a number of issues grandparents face and wish to raise awareness of the need for financial, legal, welfare and emotional support. Often grandparents take on this vital role without any support. We have found that our issues are both national and local as there are growing numbers of grandparents raising their grandchildren.

We would welcome a policy from the Executive which supports grandparents including making the ‘Relative Carers Allowance’ more accessible to all those raising their grandchildren. Please see our recommendations on page 13 of the enclosed report.

We would welcome your response.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Wilson
Grandparents ‘Parenting Again’ Group
Grandparents “Parenting Again”
Event Report 2006

“Time to value, support and respect grandparents who are parenting again.”

HELP
Midlothian Healthy Living Partnership Project
In partnership with
The Dalkeith Integration Team
and Midlothian SureStart
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Recommendations 13
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The Way Forward 15

Thanks

Thanks to all the grandparents who organised the event and special thanks to the grandparents who told their stories. Thanks to our guest speaker from Kinsfolk Carers and to all the agencies which provided workshops and information.

HELPP (Midlothian Healthy Living Partnership Project)
3 Eskdaill Court
Dalkeith
Midlothian
EH22 1AG
Tel: 0131 660 5055
Fax: 0131 663 9839
e.mail: sandra@helpp.org.uk
Background

The Grandparents ‘Parenting Again’ group have been meeting each Thursday morning at the SureStart Hand-in-Hand project in Woodburn since October 2005. Midlothian Healthy Living Partnership Project (Helpp) together with the Dalkeith Integration Team and Midlothian SureStart identified a gap in services for grandparents who are the main carers of their grandchildren.

A growing number of grandparents are finding themselves having to take on the parental role on a full-time basis due to a variety of reasons including drug misuse and mental health issues within the family. Grandparents are playing a vital role in caring for their grandchildren but often receive little or no support. The aim was to bring grandparents together to talk about the challenges, joys and realities of caring for their grandchildren, gain support and encouragement through shared experiences. A crèche and refreshments were offered. The group of eight members have since agreed the following aims:

- To raise awareness of the issues facing grandparents parenting again.
- To formulate ways to take forward their identified issues.
- To promote the group and expand its membership.

The group agreed to organise an awareness raising event in partnership with Midlothian Healthy Living Partnership Project following a successful funding bid to Awards for All through Midlothian Voluntary Action. The idea behind the event was for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren to have the opportunity to tell their story, stimulate discussion and identify issues. The group agreed to adapt the ‘Story Dialogue method’ (see page 6) and use this at the event to widen the discussion about the issues which grandparents face when raising their grandchildren.

The grandparents also wished to share the knowledge they had gathered since meeting and invited local agencies who are working with families to offer workshops at the event. Grandparents Parenting Again have strengthened its links with other groups and invited ‘Kinsfolk Carers’ who are based in Edinburgh to speak at the event.

Publicity

The group sent letters and invitations out to over 118 grandparents through local schools and nurseries. Invitations were also sent to local agencies working with families to distribute as well as posters. A press release was prepared and received coverage in the Dalkeith Advertiser.
The Event Programme

**Grandparents 'Parenting Again' Event**

on Thursday 27 April 2006 at 10am-2pm
at Dalkeith Miners Welfare, Woodburn Road, Dalkeith

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>10am</td>
<td>Registration and refreshments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.15am</td>
<td>Welcome from ‘Grandparents – Parenting Again’ Group and Midlothian Healthy Living Partnership Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>A Grandparents Story - Story dialogue session</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.45am</td>
<td>Insights from session</td>
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<tr>
<td>12noon</td>
<td>Guest Speakers – Dorothy Bremner/Val Cameron ‘Kinsfolk Carers Group’ Edinburgh</td>
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| 12.15 & 12.45 (½ hour sessions) | Workshops Choice:  
  • Welfare Rights,  
  • Parental Rights & Responsibilities  
  • Richmond’s Hope  
  • Family Group Conferencing  
  • Children’s Reporter  
  • Complementary Therapy |
| 1.15pm      | Roundup - What have we learned today?  
The Way Forward  
Closing Remarks – Grandparents ‘Parenting Again’ Group and Midlothian Healthy Living Partnership Project |
| 1.30pm      | Buffet lunch                                                             |
| 2pm         | Close                                                                    |
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS/AGENCIES AT THE EVENT

50 People attended the event including:

- 16 Grandparents and 4 great grandparents from across Midlothian.

The following local agencies were represented:

- Children 1st Family Group Conferencing
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Dalkeith Integration Team
- Health Improvement Co-ordinator, Midlothian Council
- Kinsfolk Carers, Edinburgh
- MELD (Mid and East Lothian Drugs)
- Midlothian Childcare Information Service
- Midlothian Healthy Living Partnership Project
- Penicuik Integration Team
- Public Health Practitioner, NHS
- Richmond’s Hope Bereavement Project
- Scottish Children’s Reporter Service
- Scottish Executive
- Welfare Rights Team, Midlothian Council

The following Midlothian Councillors attended the event:

- Cllr. Daniel Molloy
- Cllr. Ray Prior
- Cllr. Sam Campbell, Provost of the Council
STORY DIALOGUE SESSION

Aims:

- To use the story dialogue technique to draw out important themes and issues affecting grandparents.
- To increase understanding of the issues grandparents face raising their grandchildren.

- Introductions & Roles
- Ground rules
- Story 1
- Story 2
- Reflection Circle (How is this story your story?)
- Questions – Structured Dialogue (what, why, so what and now what questions)
- Notes were taken from the discussion to create insight cards
- Roundup – What do we take forward.

Story 1 - A Great Grandparent's Story

Our great grandson was born to drug addicted parents (our granddaughter) who deserted him. We received a call from the police in the middle of the night asking if we could come and take care of our great grandchild.

When we got there we found the child to be in very poor condition and smelly. We were refused access to the parent’s flat by police and had to take the child and buy clothes and basics on the way home.

Our grand daughter was to be held in custody for 2 weeks and friends and family rallied round in support.

3 days later we had a visit from the Social Work Department. We were told we were entitled to no financial support since we were blood relatives but were given some of the money we spent with a promise that the rest would be reimbursed. This never came.

The child’s mother was sentenced to 18 months in prison and the child remained in our care and the bonds grew.

The family took a van and went to the flat before it was repossessed by the Council and were horrified to see the living conditions. “A bombsite within a bombsite”. We couldn’t believe things had been so bad and that our great grandchild had been living in such deprivation. We found lots of brand new clothes and a brand new cot which had been gifted and which had been never used. The drug dealers had taken the new pram as part payment for debts with threats left that the baby would be harmed if these weren’t paid.
With my husband at work and me being disabled and lots of family support, care of our great grandchild continued. Our granddaughter was diagnosed as being infected with Hepatitis C and tests over three months at the hospital showed the baby to be negative.

Visits to the prison were difficult and expensive with taxi and train trips involved. No financial help was available through social services. Our grand daughter accused us of stealing her baby and accused social services of not allowing her enough access.

The only time we saw the father of the child was on his first birthday. He arrived with a present and card, caused us no problems and we never saw him since.

Our granddaughter was released after 13 months and was going to stay with us. She was a lovely artist and had been going to start college. She called to say she had lots to do, would be seeing her probation officer and when she finally arrived at the house, she was stoned having spent all her money on drugs. She was abusive and attacked us. Her behaviour continued to be abusive and we spent some evenings sitting in the dark pretending to be out not answering the phone. She finally found herself a new boyfriend to whom she fell pregnant. The baby was born and now lives with an aunt.

Social services terminated the supervision order and we were on our own.

Family and friends continue with their support and good support is received through the school, which our great grandson loves.

Financially, nothing has changed. We receive tax credits and child benefit and the rest we find from our pensions.

Sometimes we wish we were just normal grandparents to the wee man but also appreciate how much we would have missed out on.
Story 2 – A Grandparents Story

I have 4 children (2 adopted) and I’ve worked with children for many years. I’ve been a foster carer, looking after 26 children aged between 0-16 years of age. We lived in a 3 bed roomed house looking after 5 grandchildren, our son and adopted daughter.

The children thrived, were happy and contented and lived in a stable environment. However the living conditions were very cramped, the children had to sit on the floor to be able to see the television. We had to get a bigger car, bigger saucepans, more cutlery, washing machine and tumble dryer to help with the increased household. We desperately needed a bigger house. The council and social work allocated us the upstairs flat to accommodate the children.

The local primary school have been very helpful.

Last year, whilst in the local library I came across a poster about grandparents looking after their grandchildren and thought this is what I have been looking for. I joined the group and am very passionate about it. It really helps being able to listen to other grandparents, and this helps us all. I’ve accessed the welfare rights as I needed help to fill in the forms. The Integration Team have been a great help. Richmond Hope helped after my husband died, they assisted with bereavement counselling for my grandson. The community police have also been very good.

If I hadn’t had this help, I don’t know what I would have done.

I hope the children are happy living with their gran.
INSIGHTS FROM THE GROUP DISCUSSION

The moving stories heard at the event evoked a discussion about the issues grandparents raising their grandchildren live with on a day-to-day basis. The discussion was important and unfortunately this ran on longer than expected and the insights had to be drawn from the notes taken at the event. We typed these up and presented them to the Grandparent 'Parenting Again' group who were asked to read through these and formulate categories so that key issues could be taken forward from the event.

MAKING CATEGORIES

Grandparents were asked to look at the insight cards drawn from the group discussion and to look for patterns. This helped build categories and linked different ideas and issues. They gave each category a name around a central idea. The categories chosen from the insight cards are:

- Financial
- Legal
- Policy & Practice
- Emotional Support
- Information
ISSUES RAISED

FINANCIAL

- Money should be allocated to local authorities, specifically earmarked for grandparents inline with Foster Care Grants.
- Fostering – foster carers could receive between £300-£600 per child, but grandparents applying to foster their grandchildren have to go through fostering procedures and were not guaranteed to get their own grandchildren.
- Grandparents are at a time in their lives when they thought they were going to be independent of childcare financial worries. Suddenly they are a parent again but without the physical and financial means.
- Grandparents have their own health problems which impacts financially as well as physically.
- Grandparents do not receive basic welfare e.g. milk tokens, clothing grants.
- Grandparents receive no financial payments because they are blood relatives.
- If child was still with parent they would be entitled to free school meals, clothing grants – why is this not available to grandparents?
- The cost of providing additional space in your home, cramped living conditions.
- Housing is an issue, children need space and grandparents are often in smaller houses.
- As a working grandparent all my wages are paying for childcare expenses, what will happen when I retire soon?
- Highland Region and Glasgow City Council have Kinship Care grants available to grandparents. Why is this not available in our area?
- New Zealand recognises the need to provide financial and emotional support to keep families together – do we need to move to New Zealand to access financial support?
- Parents on drugs have more support in place, grandparents are unfairly treated.
- What would have happened to our grandchildren if we hadn’t stepped in. Who would fit the bill?
- Discrepancies in advice given and who can apply e.g. Relative Carer Allowance.
- There should be a universal ‘grandparents’ grant available to all.
- Grandparents are being forced into potential poverty.

LEGAL

- Grandparents should be able to access legal aid.
- Grandparents need legal advice early on before making important decisions which have long term consequences.
- Grandparents have to pay legal fees for caring for their blood relatives.
• Legal aid is made available to parents, but not grandparents who are looking after their grandchildren with costs of up to £2,000 on court charges.
• No legal rights – grandparents are told they have no rights, not event the right to sign forms for school.
• Mothers can sign over parental rights to fathers but why not to grandparents? Why do grandparents have to go through the court when the mother is willing to sign parental rights over

POLICY & PRACTICE

• Agencies must work together and not in a vacuum especially those that have statutory powers.
• Social work can use emotional blackmail with grandparents.
• Grandparents are left to get on with it by social work.
• Being fobbed off at meetings by social work.
• Social Work are not represented at the event today.
• Once the residency order is through social work close the file and grandparents are left to get on with it.
• Timescales to get a response.
• Lack of support from social work – once grandparents have care of their grandchildren the social work department steps back.
• Caravan holidays – social work say they are available and will look into it, but they never get back to us.
• Would have benefited from a scribe being present at social work meetings as a proper record of what was said or promised.
• Grandparent can be classed as a single parent and expected to return to work to support grandchild.
• Grandparents had to undertake medical tests, police disclosure checks to look after their grandchildren, whereas parents did not have to.
• Policy changes take time, a length parliamentary process.
• Scottish Executive – legislation is being looked at for grandparents, It is a very long time due to legal constraints.
• Grandparents get lost in policies – foster care, changing children’s service plans.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

• There should be more support groups for grandparents.
• Coping with the drug addicted parents was a major concern for grandparents.
• Caring for elderly parents as well as grandchildren was a heavy financial and emotional burden on grandparents.
• Why aren’t complementary therapies available to grandparents, but not a cost of £30 a time.
• Assertive skills are needed to cope with the demands on grandparents from family and social work.
• Health visitors have been very supportive and went out of their way to help.
• Respite care is available to drug addicted parents – what about the grandparents?
• Respite care is an issue – especially when looking after our own ageing parents and grandchildren.
• Not easy to ask for help, fear of grandchildren being taken into care.
• Our generation kept their problems to themselves. Not easy to go along to a support group and share what we see as our private problems but we now see that it is a public concern.
• To become a foster carer to my own grandchildren I had to complete Disclosure Checks and lose weight.
• Stress of trying to keep everyone happy.
• At times when it gets very emotional we ask what an earth are we doing this for? But then all it takes is a smile, or they say I love you and you know why you are doing it.
• Fear of not doing the job of parenting well, feeling a failure as our child got into drugs.

INFORMATION

• **We need an information leaflet for grandparents listing all local services available.**
• Lack of information available, the grandparents don’t know where to turn to for help.
• Do we have a leaflet about Kinship Care in Midlothian? I’ve seen a leaflet in East Lothian produced by Social Work.
• We must make links with other grandparent groups, part of a movement for change.
• There is a lack of information.
• Schools were really good and picked up behavioural problems early on.
• Didn’t know about the Integration Team until today.
• Misinformation from the start.
• Early intervention essential – from health workers, including consultants in hospital.
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Financial & Housing

Relative Carers Allowance for grandparents.

Relative Carers Allowance to be available to grandparents raising their grandchildren not just those registered through social work.

Housing issues – additional rooms required for raising grandchildren, grandparents are often in smaller homes.

- Legal

Grandparents to access free independent legal advice and legal aid.

- Policy & Practice

Agencies to work together and not in a vacuum especially those that have statutory powers.

Consider how different central and local government policies impact on grandparents.

- Emotional Support

Respite Care to be made available.

Locally based support groups for grandparents.

- Information

Produce an information leaflet for grandparents listing all local services available including welfare rights, kinship care and family support.
Local grandparents with Provost of the Council Cllr. Sam Campbell

WORKSHOPS

Grandparents attended the following workshops and information sessions.

- Welfare Rights
- Richmond’s Hope Bereavement Project
- Children 1st – Family group Conferencing
- Scottish Children’s Reporter Service
- Parental Rights & responsibilities (Citizens Advice Bureau)
- Complementary Therapies

WHAT PEOPLE SAID ABOUT THE DAY

“The stories told had a real impact on people, listening to the stories gave me the confidence to speak up.”

“Quite a few people came up to me after telling my story and said how much this had meant to them.”

“The two stories had something for everyone, each was very different but highlighted the problems from different angles.”

“It was a tremendous event and obviously took a lot of organisation and effort to put together.”

“We found the day a moving and powerful experience.”

“The workshops were really interesting, I didn’t know about these agencies and how much they could help me.”
"Being listened to and not preached at was refreshing."
"A good day and a lot more was learned from other grandparents who had come along."

"I've learned so much from the day."

"Welfare Rights Advice was a great help."

"The day had something for everyone, stories to share, a wide range of information, good food and a lovely relaxing massage to top it all off."

"Congratulations to the group, best wishes for the future."

"Good to know there are other groups campaigning for grandparents, the speaker from Kinsfolk Carers was inspiring."

THE WAY FORWARD

From the issues identified at the event, members of the group prepared questions to put forward to Rhona Brankin, MSP. This report will be used to raise awareness of the issues that grandparents 'parenting again' face and to keep these on the political agenda to influence change. A new group will be meeting in the Penicuik area for grandparents and the Woodburn group are looking at becoming fully constituted. As a constituted group the grandparents will be able to apply for charitable status and seek funding to provide information and support to grandparents across Midlothian.

Following the event members of the Grandparents 'Parenting Again' group met with Rhona Brankin, MSP at the Scottish Parliament to take the issues forward.
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

Bob Dickie

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

Petition by Bob Dickie, on behalf of Clydebank Asbestos Group, calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to ensure that the current prescribing arrangements for mesothelioma sufferers under which Alimta is made available are continued.

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.

Following discussions with Des McNulty MSP, Member for Clydebank and Milngavie, Mr McNulty asked an oral question in the Scottish Parliament on 18 May 2006. The transcript of the question (at Col. 25818) follows:

3. Des McNulty (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it is aware of the work being undertaken by Clydebank Asbestos Group in conjunction with West Dunbartonshire Council to address the health needs of mesothelioma patients. (S2O-9893)

The Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care (Lewis Macdonald): Yes, not least because of the constructive meeting earlier this week involving those groups, Des McNulty and Hugh Henry, at which justice issues arising from that work were discussed.

Des McNulty: I hope that my proposal for a bill will get a lot of support.

The progressive partnership that has been established between Macmillan Cancer Support and West Dunbartonshire Council has assisted hundreds of cancer patients and carers in the past 12 months. Will the minister agree to hear a presentation by the partners on an initiative that the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities is keen to see rolled out throughout Scotland? I ask him for an assurance that Alimta, which is the only licensed treatment for mesothelioma patients and which has been shown not only to increase quality of life but to extend life, will continue to be available to Scottish patients.

Lewis Macdonald: The bill to which Des McNulty referred relates to issues that require to be resolved. That was acknowledged by Hugh Henry when he met Des McNulty earlier this week.

I would be interested in any lessons that we can learn from work that is being done in West Dunbartonshire on support for patients in the circumstances that Des McNulty described.

As far as Alimta is concerned, the consultation that is being held by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence is just that: a consultation. It is not NICE's final view. It is important to stress that patients who are already receiving Alimta will continue to do so, whatever the final conclusions of the NICE consultation.

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:

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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.

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:

Mesothelioma is a rare and dangerous form of cancer that affects the lining of the lung. It is nearly always contracted through workplace exposure to asbestos. Mesothelioma can lead to chest pain, coughing, and shortness of breath, along with weakness, weight loss, lower back pains, and/or difficulty swallowing. It usually develops 20 to 40 years after exposure, however, sufferers rarely survive beyond two years after diagnosis.

In the last quarter of the twentieth century the government’s official statistics (the HSE Mesothelioma Register) recorded rates of mesothelioma in Scotland running at 31% higher than the U.K. average, while in the Clydeside region rates were almost double, and in Glasgow the rates were two and a half times higher than the U.K. average. A particular hotspot was the town of Clydebank, several miles west of Glasgow, which officially recorded the highest rate of mesothelioma mortality in the whole of the United Kingdom. There are at least 2,000 patients in Clydebank alone are battling for compensation payments. Mesothelioma kills 2,000 people every year across the UK and that this figure is expected to grow to over 2,500 a year by 2015.

There is no cure for mesothelioma but like other cancers it can be treated with chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and/or surgery to remove cancerous growths. Alimta, when given with Cisplatin, is the world’s first medication to treat asbestos-related mesothelioma and prolongs the life of mesothelioma sufferers.

In June 2006, England and Wales’ National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has rejected the drug and from October it will no longer be funded by the National Health Service (NHS). The Scottish Medicines Consortium has approved Alimta for use however NHS Quality Improvement Scotland has not recommended it for use in Scotland.

The petitioners believe that Alimta has been demonstrated to be useful for some mesothelioma sufferers and the evidence suggests improve mesothelioma survival rates and so it should continue to be made available in Scotland.

Information from the manufacturer of Alimta can be accessed at www.alimta.com