

# Petitioner submission of 7 March 2024

## PE2018/F: Recognise the value of swimming pools and provide financial relief to help keep pools open

The following pools have closed in the last year since the petition was first lodged:

- Broxburn Swimming Pool, West Lothian
- Armadale Swimming Pool, West Lothian
- Livingston Swimming Pool, West Lothian
- Auchinleck Swimming Pool, East Ayrshire
- Bo'ness Recreation Centre, Falkirk
- Bucksburn Swimming Pool, Aberdeen (to be reopened)

An even greater number are under review or under threat if investment cannot be secured. This is devastating communities for whom pools are a lifeline for health and wellbeing and a social hub for fitness, fun and friendship.

In the attached report the [Future of Swimming Facilities in Scotland](#) - 147 pools are at risk in Scotland based on their age alone. Increasing operating costs, squeezed budgets and ageing venues are putting pools at risk of closure across the country.

There is overwhelming public support and demand for pools demonstrated by recent pressure and responses to pools earmarked for closure. A recent omnibus poll found that 95% of the Scottish population agree that pools are important for safety. 93% think that all children should learn to swim and 91% agree that pool closures are bad for communities.

The closure of pools such as the sudden closure of Bo'ness Recreation Centre has huge implications for local communities. Among those affected are the thousands of children learning to swim, the clubs who rely on them to support the health and fitness of young athletes; the elderly who use the pools for wellbeing; and the wider community including groups such as scuba divers, artistic swimmers, canoeists and triathletes. Ultimately these venues not only keep children safer in and around water through swimming lessons but contribute to significant NHS savings through prevention of some of the country's most prevalent diseases and illnesses, as swimming reaches all ages and abilities. In

2022 it was estimated that swimming generated social value savings of £2.4 billion across the UK.

Swimming is one of the country's highest participation sporting activities. According to the omnibus poll, 16% of the population go swimming in a pool at least once a month. It is also the fastest growing sport since the pandemic according to the household survey and reaches high numbers of women, older age groups and people with disabilities.

Swimming pools are critical community assets. They need government investment and support to keep open for current and future generations.