

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

2nd Meeting, 2023 (Session 6), Wednesday 8
February 2023

PE1920: Introduce more thorough follow-up
care for women with diabetes:

Lodged on	20 December 2021
Petitioner	Laura Hastings
Petition summary	Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide more thorough follow-up care for women with diabetes.
Webpage	https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1920

Introduction

1. The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on [23 February 2022](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Diabetes Group and relevant stakeholders.
2. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
3. The Committee has received a new response from the Chair of Scottish Diabetes Group which is set out in **Annexe C**.
4. The Committee also wrote to Diabetes Scotland, as the relevant stakeholder group, however, a response has not yet been received.
5. Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the [petition's webpage](#).
6. Further background information about this petition can be found in the [SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.

7. The Scottish Government's initial position on this petition can be found on the [petition's webpage](#).

Action

The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerk to the Committee

Annexe A

PE1920: Introduce more thorough follow-up care for women with diabetes

Petitioner

Laura Hastings

Date Lodged:

20 December 2021

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide more thorough follow-up care for women with diabetes.

Previous action

I have raised this issue with John Mason MSP and Gillian Mackay MSP to discuss further action.

I have also been in contact with Maree Todd MSP, the Minister for Public Health, Women's Health and Sport.

Background information

We're calling for the Scottish Parliament to assist in closing the gender healthcare gap for diabetic women in Scotland.

Many women with diabetes feel abandoned by their healthcare team in navigating their diabetes, and there is a lack of research and public education on how diabetes impacts women's health.

Diabetic women are 2.55 times more likely to be diagnosed with a major depressive disorder than non-diabetic women and are more likely to suffer from sexual dysfunction and cardiovascular disease, among other issues.

Women with diabetes often feel as if they have to "wing it" in navigating their diagnosis and have not been made aware of how diabetes can affect certain aspects of their health such as sexual health, menstrual health, and body image. Women's health issues need to be included in the 'essential checks' involved in post-diagnostic screening.

Annexe B

Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE1920 on 23 February 2022

The Deputy Convener: Our next new petition is PE1920, from Laura Hastings, calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide more thorough follow-up care for women with diabetes.

In its submission, the Scottish Government outlines a range of initiatives that are available to educate and support people who live with diabetes. They include its women's health plan, which was published in August 2021, and its diabetes improvement plan, which was published in February 2021. The improvement plan has eight priority areas, which include mental health, and a focused set of actions that is overseen by the Scottish diabetes group.

Do members have any comments?

Paul Sweeney: I note the submission from the petitioner and the personal experience that she has had. I also note that she has engaged with ministers and parliamentarians on the issue. If she has not been satisfied with that, there is a valid basis for inviting further submissions. Perhaps we could write to the relevant charities that deal with diabetes and the Scottish diabetes group, which is the national advisory group, to ask whether they are satisfied with the measures that the Scottish Government has taken and establish whether there is a wider impetus for improvement.

The Scottish Government has indicated that it has relevant strategies in place for women's health and diabetic health. We can ask whether those have been peer reviewed and whether there are further concerns. It is worth establishing whether that is the case.

The Deputy Convener: On Paul Sweeney's recommendation, are we happy to keep the petition open and write to the relevant stakeholders?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Annexe C

Chair of Scottish Diabetes Group submission of 24 August 2022

PE1920/B: Introduce more thorough follow-up care for women with diabetes

Thank you for your letter dated the 28th July 2022 in relation to the above petition. I am replying in my role as national lead for diabetes, on behalf of the Scottish Diabetes Group (SDG).

The petition raises a very important issue and the commitments within the Diabetes Improvement Plan 2021 aims to ensure that all individuals with diabetes have thorough and appropriate care. We are keen to ensure that policy and clinical care models mitigate against any inequality and in relation to this petition the impact of gender.

The Scottish Diabetes Group and its subgroups were key stakeholders in informing the content and commitments within the Diabetes Improvement Plan 2021. The SDG and its subgroups have widespread representation from across the entire diabetes community in Scotland including the 3rd sector and most importantly individuals with lived experience of diabetes. As such, we have tried to ensure widespread representation across all aspects of our work including policy development and the ongoing work plans for the SDG. It is worth highlighting that in Scotland we have an excellent national diabetes dataset, SCI-diabetes, and this has informed several publications from the NHS Research Scotland (NRS) Diabetes Epidemiology group on the impact of inequalities on diabetes care. National data on pregnancy outcomes and mortality in those under the age of 50 with type 1 diabetes helped inform the content of the DIP 2021 and the ongoing commitments to improve outcomes.

The SDG, working with the wider diabetes community, have also been keen to ensure that the Diabetes Improvement Plan 2021 aligns to other policy areas such as the Mental Health Strategy. We have a focus on improving access to Mental Health services for individuals with diabetes as well as developing care models where collection of Patient Reported Outcome Measures becomes a routine part of clinical care. We feel that this will be another key aspect in mitigating against the impact of

inequalities and ensuring the ongoing development of truly person-centred care.

Although the SDG were not directly involved in the Woman's Health Plan 2021 there are key issues highlighted within this policy that are relevant to the care of women with diabetes. For example, the significant impact that menstruation and the menopause can have on diabetes control. As such, we will discuss the Woman's Health Plan at our forthcoming SDG and national Diabetes MCN meetings to ensure widespread awareness of this policy. We will also ensure that the recommendations are considered as we look to progress diabetes care models across Scotland and implement the commitments within the DIP 2021.

We note and welcome a specific focus on heart health within the Woman's Health Plan. This is particularly relevant to woman with diabetes as they are at increased risk of cardiovascular disease. As a result, we have been developing strengthening links with policy colleagues leading on Heart Disease as ensuring cross-policy working and addressing multi-morbidity will be key to improving early identification of heart disease and in turn improving outcomes.

As detailed above, we are very fortunate in Scotland to have a national diabetes IT system, SCI-diabetes, which captures information in over 99% of individuals with diabetes. We have developed a 'diabetes dashboard' which can be used at national, regional, local and individual level to assess processes and outcomes of care. It can also be utilised to drive an improvement agenda. We are currently focusing on deprivation however the inclusion of gender would also be a welcome addition. As such, I will liaise with colleagues leading the ongoing development of SCI-diabetes to ascertain if we can incorporate within our diabetes dashboard the ability to examine the potential impact of gender on the process and outcomes of diabetes care.

I trust this gives an overview of the Scottish Diabetes Group involvement in the Diabetes Improvement Plan 2021 and also the impact that the Woman's Health Plan has had and will have in developing care models to mitigate against the impact of gender on diabetes care and outcomes.

If you require any additional information or would like to discuss further please get in touch.