

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Wednesday 12 June 2024
11th Meeting, 2024 (Session 6)

PE1877: Provide body cameras for all frontline NHS staff

Introduction

Petitioner Alex Wallace

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide body cameras for all frontline NHS staff and paramedics in Scotland.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1877>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 20 April 2022](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Ambulance Service.
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 written submission from the Scottish Ambulance Service which is set out in **Annexe C**.
4. [The Committee had received 6 written submissions prior to the Committee's last consideration of the petition](#).
5. [Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.
6. [The Scottish Government gave its initial response to the petition on 8 July 2021](#).
7. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 6 signatures have been received on this petition.

Action

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

Clerks to the Committee
June 2024

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE1877: Provide body cameras for all frontline NHS staff

Petitioner

Alex Wallace

Date Lodged

10 June 2021

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide body cameras for all frontline NHS staff and paramedics in Scotland.

Previous action

I have contacted Bob Doris MSP who has advised he supports the action called for. I also submitted a similar petition a few years ago.

Background information

Providing body cameras would protect NHS staff and are vital for their security. Frontline staff including paramedics are verbally and physically abused during working hours. Body cameras would be a deterrent to stop this abuse. All other emergency services have these cameras so why not the people that are saving lives. I believe body cameras would also help staff in relation to data protection issues. Any recordings could help if the NHS is sued by patients or families. It could prove there has been no negligence, being beneficial for NHS lawyers and staff. Most NHS staff want these body cameras as they believe it would give them a bit of security. There are cameras on houses, streets, in shops, in hospital wards and main hospital buildings. These can help in insurance claims, so why not on the people that are saving lives? NHS England is going to provide body cameras to frontline staff including paramedics, NHS Scotland should follow.

Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE1877 on 20 April 2022

The Convener: PE1877, which was lodged by Alex Wallace, is on the provision of body cameras for all front-line national health service staff. We previously considered the petition on 19 January 2022. We agreed then to write to the Scottish Ambulance Service and the Scottish Government to find out more about the body camera trial that we understood was under way.

We understand from the responses that the trial is still in the scoping and planning phase, due to the extreme pressures being experienced as a result of the pandemic. The Scottish Ambulance Service listed the ways in which it intends to evaluate the technology and stated that the timescale for initial evaluation will now be towards the end of 2022. Given that we have already undertaken to await the outcome of the evaluation, it would seem sensible to wait for that.

Alexander Stewart: I acknowledge that the pandemic has had a knock-on effect on the process. The most sensible approach would be to wait until we have the pilot evaluation. At that point, we could communicate with the Scottish Ambulance Service on the outcomes of the pilot and the evaluation, and the next steps. We should continue the petition and see how we progress in the timescale that the Ambulance Service has set out.

The Convener: That means a rather extended time before we can consider the petition in any informed way, but that is probably the right course of action. Are colleagues content with that suggestion?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Annexe C: Written submission

Scottish Ambulance Service submission of 27 March 2024

PE1877/G: Provide body cameras for all frontline NHS staff

The work to evaluate body worn cameras progressed to the stage of developing a plan for the trial of equipment. It was acknowledged from the outset, that the use of surveillance equipment such as CCTV and body worn cameras can be an emotive subject. Unfortunately, due to concerns from staff side about the use of body worn camera technology, the work has not been able to progress to a live field trial stage. Initial scoping work identified that manufacturers of body worn camera equipment would likely support a trial of equipment at no cost. The full purchase and roll out of equipment across the Service, however, would likely attract a capital cost in excess of £1,500,000 and a recurring revenue cost of around £400,000.

The reluctance of staff side to support the use of body worn cameras, compounded by the current financial pressures being experienced across the public sector, has resulted in this work being paused. The Health and Safety department of the Scottish Ambulance Service, who have led this work, continue to engage with other UK Ambulance Trusts on Violence Reduction activities and continue to share best practice.