

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee  
Wednesday 9 October 2024  
15th Meeting, 2024 (Session 6)

## PE1990: Introduce a Scottish Parliament question session for young people

### Introduction

**Petitioner** Jordon Anderson

**Petition summary** Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to request the introduction of a monthly chamber session to allow young people to put questions to the First Minister and her cabinet.

**Webpage** <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1990>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 25 October 2023](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Youth Parliament, the Children's Parliament, the National Union of Students, Who Cares? Scotland, the Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities, the Intercultural Youth Scotland, Children in Scotland, Youthlink Scotland and the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.
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 new written submissions from the National Union of Students, and the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, which are set out in **Annexe C**.
4. [Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage](#).
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 25 January 2023](#).
7. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 17 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**  
**October 2024**

## **Annexe A: Summary of petition**

**PE1990: Introduce a Scottish Parliament question session for young people**

### **Petitioner**

Jordon Anderson

### **Date Lodged**

29 November 2022

### **Petition summary**

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to request the introduction of a monthly chamber session to allow young people to put questions to the First Minister and her cabinet.

### **Previous action**

I have written to my MSP Jackie Dunbar to raise the issue and ask for her views. She has since responded and mentioned that Cabinet Ministers are really busy, which may prevent them from meeting with young people. However, I have seen a young person's First Ministers Question Time done in the past, so I think my petition still has a standing ground.

### **Background information**

The Government have a very good track record of saying they care a lot about Children & Young People. However, during the course of the pandemic we have seen this to be far from true. Thousands of children and young people still live in poverty and hundreds are walking the streets due to homelessness - the list goes on! The least the Scottish Government can do is give young people the chance to put questions to them.

Young People are the future! In 15/20 years from now, young people will be running the country and making the decisions. Right now the political landscape has many significant priorities. We need certainty. Our MSPs can't give us time, so how do we ensure our voices are heard? We shouldn't have to hide behind a 3rd party organisation to be heard!

We have seen FMQ's done before by so there is no reason why the Government and organisations cannot partner up and do this type of thing again.

## **Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE1990 on 25 October 2023**

**The Convener:** The next petition is PE1990, which was lodged by Jordon Anderson. It calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to request the introduction of a monthly chamber session to allow young people to put questions to the First Minister and the Cabinet.

In our previous consideration, we agreed to write to key stakeholders—we delegated authority to me, as convener, to agree who those stakeholders might be. The Scottish Parliament information centre has provided a list of possible stakeholders, which is in the clerk's note. However, since the petition was last considered, the committee has published its report, "Embedding Public Participation in the Work of the Parliament", which includes a response to the recommendations made by the citizens panel. Colleagues will recall that one of those recommendations is very similar to what the petition calls for. Recommendation 14 is to

"Schedule specific time in the debating Chamber for individual public questions to be asked."

As members will recall, we concluded in our report that

"We do not support the recommendation for a question time which is part of formal Parliamentary business, as we think it raises too many difficulties both of practice and principle ... Having said all that, we would be willing to see the idea further explored, if there is cross-party support for doing so."

The petitioner has provided information that supports his view that young people are becoming increasingly engaged in politics and need greater representation in it. Authority was delegated to me previously, but I want to bring that back to the committee, given our inquiry into the subject matter. We could write to a number of stakeholders, as identified by the clerks: the Scottish Youth Parliament, the Children's Parliament, the National Union of Students, Who Cares? Scotland, the Scottish Commissioner for People with Learning Disabilities, Intercultural Youth Scotland, Children in Scotland and YouthLink Scotland.

Are we content to get their views, ahead of what I understand will be a session of the Scottish Youth Parliament here, at Holyrood, potentially next year? If there is sufficient interest, that might well be a route that we could recommend as a way forward for the petition. Are we content to continue on that basis?

**David Torrance:** Given our report and the recommendations in it, could we write to stakeholders to ask specifically about alternative ways that they could engage with the Scottish Government outside parliamentary business?

**The Convener:** Yes. That would make sense, too. Thank you.

**Foysoil Choudhury (Lothian) (Lab):** My daughter is a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament. Can we increase the frequency with which the Scottish Parliament and the SYP hold joint sessions?

**The Convener:** I do not think that we have ever held a joint session. The Scottish Parliament has provided its campus for the Scottish Youth Parliament to meet. The policy has been that that happens once in each session of the Scottish Parliament, I think. Are you suggesting that we write to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, to ask whether it would—?

**Foyso! Choudhury:** Yes, to ask the SPCB to consider holding joint sessions. That would give—

**The Convener:** Has the Scottish Youth Parliament made that request itself?

**Foyso! Choudhury:** I have had a few meetings with youth parliamentarians and they have suggested that they want more engagement with MSPs.

**The Convener:** Could we write to the corporate body to draw its attention to the petition? We could say that the committee would be interested to know whether the corporate body has had any engagement with the Scottish Youth Parliament as to whether it might be possible to facilitate more regular sessions of the SYP in Holyrood. Are members content to do that?

**Members *indicated agreement.***

## **Annexe C: Written submissions**

### **National Union of Students submission of 21 November 2023**

#### **PE1990/C: Introduce a Scottish Parliament question session for young people**

NUS Scotland has no position on this petition. We align ourselves with the views made, and subsequently held, by the Scottish Youth Parliament.

### **Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body submission of 24 November 2023**

#### **PE1990/D: Introduce a Scottish Parliament question session for young people**

On behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB), I can confirm that we have not received any representations from the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) to request that more of its sittings take place in the Scottish Parliament.

The Committee might, however, be interested to know that there has been a new annual exhibition slot added to the partnership agreement between the SPCB and SYP. This has helped to improve their presence at the Parliament allowing more opportunity to engage and develop relationships with Members despite some of their recent sittings not taking place.

In addition, the SPCB is due to consider its Major Events and Exhibitions Programme for 2024/25 at a forthcoming meeting. Part of the discussion will focus on the autumn sitting for the SYP in 2024 which is the biennial sitting as set out in the partnership agreement.

I would be happy to feedback on any decision made at that meeting if it would be helpful.

**David McGill**  
**Clerk/Chief Executive**