



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01419

Name of petitioner

Jimmy Deuchars

Petition title

Scottish Minister for Older People

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to create a dedicated Minister for Older People.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

Setting up a Political Party and running for parliament in the 2011 elections.

Constant approaches to MSPs by members of Grandparents Apart UK to resolve family problems and being older people as well it is double the pain and hurt.

We have been in contact with Margaret McLaughlin, Bill Aitken, Willie Coffey, about the problems older grandparents have, sadly they have not carried it on and we have contacted nearly every MSP with newsletters. Every time a client came to us we notified their MSP of their plight but not one MSP helped them with the exception of Jack McConnell. This leads us to say that MSPs cannot help against social services unless they are the First Minister. I have had lots of replies from MSPs civil servants about the problem but none were ever satisfactory.

Petition background information

By running a grandparent's charity we find that older people and grandparents are not treated as well as they should be. Some are living in real poverty with having to make decisions as to feed themselves or heat themselves as they cannot now do both.

Older people are fast becoming one of the largest groups in Scotland: the country now have a greater number of people aged 60 and over than it does people aged 16 and under.

Older people, especially grandparents often keep their families going with financial help and often need to care for their grandchildren while the parents work leaving them short themselves If they refuse they are cut off from their families. This can lead to illness and real poverty for older people. We feel the government is not doing enough and there needs to be a dedicated Minister to know intimately the health and welfare of older people which grandparents make up the majority. Research from Prof Peter Smith and Linda Drew of Goldsmith College found that 82% of older people's real and psychosomatic are caused by loneliness and separation from their families and the

government appears to be ignoring this. It is a major problem.

Life expectancy will only continue to increase, and our Government will face significant challenges as it prepares to serve the ageing population. The UK and Scotland has no choice but to ensure that older people can live comfortably and enjoy dignity and respect in their later years.

Despite making up 40% of voters, there is no Scottish Government Minister dedicated to the well-being of older people. Older people's issues are scattered throughout various Government departments. I was amazed to discover that older people are currently part of the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy's portfolio. Older people again must be very low on the priorities list when we still have the same continuing problems. We do have a dedicated Minister for Children and Young People so why not for older people who I believe are fast becoming the larger group of voters?

What is sorely lacking is a centralised Scottish Government portfolio that prioritises the needs of older people and ensures that their views and interests receive dedicated attention.

A Scottish Minister for Older People could be looking into ways of keeping older people in connection with their families and society in general in an effort to combat loneliness and depression and by sending out messages of encouragement to the population in general that older people can be worthwhile. Older people feel they are on the scrap heap. I heard one saying the other day that once you reach retirement age no-one is interested in you. He was in particular referring to his experience of the NHS. Feeling that they are on the 'scrap heap' is common for the majority of older people, the Scottish Government could change that if a dedicated Minister was looking after their welfare. Pensions, housing, health, heating, general welfare of older people is a big concern and a minister could be ensuring these services are constant and up to date.

The Scottish Government could introduce family education/contact/mediation centres where older people could be kept in touch with their families. Family disputes could be resolved by mediation keeping it out of the courts.

Many governments around the world, including those of Ireland and Canada, currently have a dedicated Minister for older people, and it is high time Scotland followed suit. Both Wales and Northern Ireland have appointed an Older People's Commissioner, but all older people living in Scotland deserve a centralised ministerial post that looks after their needs.

Older people are people to be proud of; people to respect; people who deserve someone at the highest level to look after their interests.

We, therefore, call on our Government to provide real leadership for Scotland's older people: to listen to their issues, give voice to them, and help all Scottish citizens enjoy happy living in the years ahead.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01419>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

NO

How many signatures have you collected so far?

1

Closing date for collecting signatures online

N/A

Comments to stimulate online discussion
