



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01711

Name of petitioner

Stuart Callison on behalf of St Andrew's First Aid

Petition title

First Aid Training for All Primary School Children in Scotland

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to

1. Ensure that all primary schools in Scotland incorporate basic first aid as an integral part of their curriculum; and
2. Provide funding in order to develop high quality teaching materials on what to do in common emergencies, as well as to establish training and support for teachers to enable them to deliver these skills during short, interactive first aid workshops.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

We have already been in touch with all constituency and regional MSPs and met with the Public Health Minister at the time, Aileen Campbell MSP, to discuss our ambitions. In January of this year, a debate was held in parliament led by Johann Lamont MSP, to highlight the opportunities and value of teaching first aid in primary schools and in May, three of our youngest life-savers hosted a first aid drop in session at the parliament, which was well attended by MSPs from across all parties.

We have also sought to promote the campaign through the media, including BBC Scotland, STV, Bauer Radio, Scottish Sun and a number of regional and local publications and online platforms.

Petition background information

Who we are

St Andrew's First Aid has been active for almost 150 years and is Scotland's only dedicated first aid charity. Established in 1882, St Andrew's First Aid set up the world's first ambulance service, and as one of the three Voluntary Aid Societies (with the British Red Cross and St John Ambulance, originally recognised for their work in support of British troops in World War One) help to write the UK's definitive First Aid Manual. Every year we train thousands of people in life-saving skills and our volunteers and

staff are trained to the highest standard.

What we want to do

We want to see the day when no one dies or suffers because they needed first aid and didn't get it. We want to teach young people who might not otherwise have access to first aid training how to save lives, enabling them to be responsible citizens and effective contributors to society. We also want to sow the seed of community and personal resilience and wellbeing, and tackle health inequalities, and in turn reduce the burden on the NHS.

First aid is not part of the school curriculum in Scotland and therefore it is down to each individual authority whether or not these life-saving skills are taught to pupils. In the UK as a whole only 5% of people have first aid training, while areas of deprivation and poverty in Scotland have higher death rates and lower life expectancy and first aid training is often low on the list of priorities due to the cost involved. If children and young adults are equipped with these skills at an early age and within school they will become lifelong advocates of first aid and make a huge difference within their families and their local community. Whilst we very much welcome recent initiatives in Glasgow and elsewhere to introduce CPR training in schools, they address only one aspect of emergency life support and not the wider range of skills needed.

How we want to do it

Our goal in the first instance is to ensure that all state primary schools in Scotland incorporate basic first aid as an integral part of their curriculum, providing high quality teaching materials on what to do in common emergencies as well as direct training and support for teachers to enable them to deliver these skills as part of their praxis, cascading first aid knowledge to their pupils during short, interactive first aid workshops. The initial focus should be on delivering to schools in Education Authorities with high levels of deprivation as measured by the SIMD and thereafter to roll the programme out to other Council areas.

Several European Governments, notably Italy and Germany, mandate at least two hours of first aid training a year, but despite regular calls to follow suit, the UK Government has consistently rejected this. The situation is further complicated in Scotland by the devolved nature of responsibility for the Curriculum for Excellence, in that thirty two local education authorities would need to be persuaded of the merits of the case. However, European experience has in any event noticed that the curriculum on paper is not necessarily the curriculum in practice. In other words without enthusing and encouraging teachers and supporting them to deliver training, the benefits sought from mandatory learning will be hard to deliver. Rather than join the calls for compulsion, our proposals are designed to work with staff and make teaching first aid as easy as possible.

The Scottish Government should also incorporate peer support modules to enable the pupils to become leaders within their school and assist with the workshop delivery.

Creating peer facilitators among school First Aiders will empower them with the skills to transfer knowledge to their peers within their school environment. The long term plan would be that the school becomes self-sustainable in its delivery of workshops. This will include working with support staff to assist in the delivery of further peer facilitation courses to suitable pupils so that the school becomes self-sufficient in delivering first aid awareness sessions. Once again, recent (2016) research by the Copenhagen Academy for Medical Education found that there was no difference in the quality of first aid training being provided by those young people who had learned from peers in this way.

What are the potential benefits of the project?

There is ample evidence from European experience that there are significant advantages to teaching first aid to primary school age children. They tend to be more open to learning the skills involved and the response to first aid training is better in that starting early appears to lead to a higher level of competence later on. Children as young as nine and ten were able to perform basic life-saving skills, and their knowledge retention after three months was found to be good (Source: European Resuscitation

Council).

Danish experience found that there was no benefit in using medical personnel or First Aiders to teach in schools: teaching staff were better able to integrate the skills required into the broader curriculum, and this helped to reduce costs and scheduling problems.

In the Pavia district of Italy, researchers found that teaching CPR in schools improved the rate of bystander intervention in the surrounding city and neighbourhoods by 12 to 13% compared with the province as a whole (where training in schools was not offered). In other words, children tended to go home and show parents and siblings what to do. So these skills will not only make the school environment a safe and knowledgeable place for the young people to learn but will also encourage them to help in their communities and keep their family and friends safe.

For several years, St Andrew's First Aid has run a successful first aid schools programme - BandAge - in areas of multiple deprivation in Glasgow. The most recent project evaluation reported that most of the participants felt unprepared and scared to administer first aid before receiving training, rating their skills at just 2 out of 10. After completing training, the average rating rose to 9 out of 10, with the young people reporting not only that they now felt confident of delivering first aid in an emergency, but of feeling responsible and important as a result:

"We are learning to save lives here, and it could be your life we save next";

"We don't get this training in normal school time and I don't think we can get it anywhere else really, so who is going to help when we grow up? It should be every school, and every pupil, who gets the chance to do this."

The peer element of the suggested programme can equip participants with key life and employability skills and will be especially advantageous to those pupils who will not follow traditional educational routes. This part of the project will also allow the skills learnt by pupils to be sustainable, as peer facilitators will be able to share the skills they have learnt with other peer groups, and reinforces the core ACE (A Curriculum for Excellence) capacities: confident individual, successful learner, responsible citizen and effective contributor. Government support will not only teach first aid skills but also empower pupils to have more confidence and improve their CV. First aid is a practical skill which can be learned by everybody.

Within St Andrew's First Aid we have a section of our organisation which caters for 8 to 11 year olds called the Thistles. By the time they are ready to leave this age group, they are all fully competent in all aspects of emergency first aid.

Resource requirements

To deliver the project to every school in Scotland would cost in the region of £543,000 per year - just £1.36 per pupil - falling to around £200,000 in years two and three. Although these clearly represent good value for money, there is obviously scope to reduce the programme costs by concentrating on those areas with the worst health and wellbeing outcomes. For example, to deliver a pilot programme in Glasgow and the West of Scotland would cost around £92,000 in year one.

Unique web address

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/firstaidprimaryschools>

Related information for petition

Video link below

<https://youtu.be/EWpdVGhLgbo>

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

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

06 / 12 / 2018

Comments to stimulate online discussion

Should primary school children be given the opportunity to learn how to save a life?