



The Scottish Parliament

(For official use only)
PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE1246

Should you wish to submit a public petition for consideration by the Public Petitions Committee please refer to the guidance leaflet [How to submit a public petition](#) and the Guidance Notes at the back of this form.

1. NAME OF PRINCIPAL PETITIONER

(If applicable, please specify the name of the organisation on whose behalf the petition is raised)

Belinda Cunnison on behalf of Freedom to Choose (Scotland)

2. PETITION TITLE

Smoke-free mental health services

3. PETITION TEXT

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to review its consultation 'Achieving smoke-free mental health services' which contains factual inaccuracies thus making the process fatally flawed.

4. ACTION TAKEN TO RESOLVE ISSUES OF CONCERN BEFORE SUBMITTING THE PETITION

Unanswered letter on behalf of our organisation to First Minister (18 February) & follow-up on 4 March. Alerting MSPs (Malcolm Chisholm and Margaret Smith) to false information in consultation document. Correspondence with Head of Tobacco Control dating back to 16 January 2009, including a request for a full list of references (supplied on request, but should be available in the consultation document).

5. PETITION BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The document contains several assertions that are questionable and/or extremely tenuous, and the entire document is unreferenced. The document itself treats 'smoke-free mental health services' as a matter of 'when not if' and

relies on claims that are disputed, but are stated as unquestioned fact.

The statements in the consultation listed below gave rise to our first queries, direct to the Tobacco Control division, since they were not supported by a bibliography.

The consultation makes reference to a 17 per cent reduction in heart attacks in the year following the ban's implementation. This information is at odds with routine data covering the whole of Scotland (see Tables AC1 to AC5 accessible from <http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/5767.html>). and a letter in our possession from an officer in the Tobacco Control division acknowledges that the year on year drop in heart attacks from 2005–2008 was just over 6 per cent and not 17 per cent.

Further examples include 'a causal association' with various conditions suffered by children; 745 deaths caused by SHS in the home annually; SHS triggering heart attacks after short intervals of exposure; evidence that the smoking ban has been 'successful'; breathing difficulties in mental health patients 'likely to be caused' by smoking; 'smoking may be playing a role in the development of the illness'.

Questions in the consultation presume consent to a comprehensively smoke-free policy. The only question that allows respondents to state an actual preference to retain the smoking ban exemption in psychiatric units/hospitals begins: 'In order to achieve smoke-free mental health services in Scotland ...'. The issue of **whether** to go smoke-free does not appear to be under discussion. Respondents who do not agree to a smoke-free policy have to articulate their position from scratch, rather than simply ticking a box.

6. DO YOU WISH YOUR PETITION TO BE HOSTED ON THE PARLIAMENT'S WEBSITE AS AN E-PETITION?

YES

7. CLOSING DATE FOR E-PETITION

17/04/2009

8. COMMENTS TO STIMULATE ON-LINE DISCUSSION

The consultation 'Achieving smoke-free mental health services' should be terminated. It aims to show public support for an end to exemptions to the smoke free policy in mental health settings, referring in one of its questions to the possibility of extending bans to hospital grounds, which goes beyond the provisions of current legislation. In doing so it refers to contentious and tenuous claims as facts. The consultation contains no bibliography.