



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

(For official use only)
PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE1403

PLEASE REFER TO GUIDANCE NOTES AT THE BACK OF THIS FORM.

1. Name of petitioner

Mr. Peter Morris

2. Petition title

To improve support and assistance to victims of crime and their families

3. Petition text

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to consider the need for new legislation and provision to protect, support and assist victims of crime.

4. Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

My personal experience of being a victim in a horrific murder trial and seeing firsthand what support was available locally post trial, showed a severe chasm in the rehabilitation of all victims involved especially the emotional support provided.

The campaign "Petition to Stop Victims of Crime Having to Suffer a Life Sentence" concerns bridging the gap between justice and the road to recovery.

Undergraduate and postgraduate students from the Aberdeen Law Project contacted and examined the services and charities that provide services in this area. Their findings suggested that there was a gap in post trial support for all victims involved, the lack of support can often hinder the victims road to recovery therefore we want to prevent the re-victimisation of all people involved.

Research was conducted through various online forums where other victims shared their concern and disappointment regarding post trial support. This research is unpublished.

Dave McKenna Chief Executive of Victims Support Scotland has given support and assistance in regards to the petition and the potential outcome.

I have contacted Councillor Mark MacDonald MSP North East who has provided his support and has made numerous endeavours to assist the campaign and petition through the initial stages: the organisation of Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill to meet informally regarding the need for greater support in the rehabilitation of victims.

Graeme Dey MSP Angus South has agreed to be support the petition.

To raise wide spread awareness of the problems at hand I have organised a 17 day walk from Tarves to Edinburgh.

There has been an abundance of media coverage throughout all stages of the petition. Media organisations such as Press and Journal, ITV Day Break, BBC, Daily Record, Shmu Radio, Reporting Scotland.

5. Petition background information

The petition was suggested and created by myself [Peter Morris], the brother of the late Claire Morris. She tragically lost her life at the hands of her husband, Malcolm Webster in 1994 who was subsequently convicted of Claire's murder in 2011.

The research highlighted in section 4 suggests that there is insufficient post trial support for victims of crime.

The limited funding provided by the government has lead to a restriction in the ability of Organisations support for victims.

1. I call for the Scottish Parliament to urge The Scottish Government to consider the need for emotional support available post trial for victims. The provision of a free counselling service for victims post trial is deemed to be necessary by the public. Although the rehabilitation of criminals is necessary, the victims should not come second to this. Research shows that public opinion displays a need for more support for victims of crimes and families.
2. I suggest that the government aid organisations that support victims by introducing guidance notes with regards to the minimum support organisations must provide post trial for victims.
3. I support the work of The Scottish Strategy for Victims and would encourage the continuing development of this initiative; and urge the government to highlight the importance of the support of victims post trial. We propose that there is a need for this to be provided by the public sector, not merely the voluntary sector.
4. I urge that the public sector body: Victim Information and Advice (VIA) increase the amount of assistance given to victims as at the moment there is limited support post trial.
5. Research has suggested that the support available must be sought out by the victims, and is not provided as an integrated service for the victims. This shows that there is not adequate support for the victims.

6. Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website as an e-petition?

NO

7. Closing date for e-petition

8. Comments to stimulate on-line discussion