

# HOW TO CREATE A GOVERNMENT PETITION

Anyone can start a petition that can be submitted to the UK government so long as they are a British citizen or UK resident. You must also ensure that you have five people who will be willing to support your petition.

Presuming the above conditions are met, the process then continues as follows:

- The petition is checked against the standards for petitions and as long as your petition meets the standards it will then be published
- British citizens and UK residents can then sign your petition. They can only sign a petition once.
- The Petitions Committee reviews all petitions that are published. They select petitions of interest to find out more about the issues raised. They have the power to press for action from the government or Parliament
- Once your petition gets 10,000 signatures your petition on the UK Government and Parliament site gets a response from the government
- At 100,000 signatures your petition on the UK Government and Parliament site will be considered for a debate in Parliament

**Please Note:** *Petitions which people have started on the UK Government and Parliament petitions website are the only petitions that the Committee will consider, and that the Government is obliged to respond to. Petitions hosted on external websites will not be considered.*

Before submitting a petition there are several details which should be considered, including information on debates, the Petitions Committee, Standards for Petitions and recall petitions. Please see below.

## DEBATES

Petitions which reach 100,000 signatures are almost always debated. However, a decision may be made not to put a petition forward for debate if the issue has already been debated recently or there's a debate scheduled for the near future. If this is the case, you will be contacted to be informed about how you can find out more about parliamentary debates on the issue raised by your petition.

MPs might also consider your petition for a debate before it reaches 100,000 signatures.

You may be contacted about the issue covered by your petition. For example, sometimes a person (or people) who have created petitions are invited to take part in a discussion with MPs or government ministers, or to give evidence to a select committee.

The government may also write to other people or organisations to ask them about the issue raised by your petition.

## THE PETITIONS COMMITTEE

The Petitions Committee can:

- write to you for more information
- invite you to talk to the Committee in person about your petition – this could be in Parliament or somewhere else in the UK
- ask for evidence from the Government or other relevant people or organisations
- press the government for action
- ask another parliamentary committee to look into the topic raised by a petition
- put forward a petition for debate

The Petitions Committee is set up by the House of Commons. It comprises up to 11 backbench Members of Parliament from Government and Opposition parties. The number of committee members from each political party is representative of the membership of the House of Commons as a whole.

## STANDARDS FOR PETITIONS

According to the standards for petitions, all petitions submitted must:

- call for a specific action from the UK Government or the House of Commons
- be about something that the Government or the House of Commons is directly responsible for

Petitions can also disagree with the Government and ask for it to change its policies. They can also be critical of the UK Government or Parliament.

However, petitions that don't meet the rules will be rejected. If your petition is rejected you will be informed as to why and where possible, suggestions will be made regarding other ways in which you could raise your issue.

Reasons for petitions to potentially be rejected include:

- It calls for the same action as a petition that's already open
- It doesn't ask for a clear action from the UK Government or the House of Commons
- It's about something the UK Government or House of Commons is not directly responsible for.
- That includes: something that your local council is responsible for; something that another Government (such as the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government or the Northern Ireland Executive) is responsible for; something that is an operational decision for a government or parliamentary body, and something that an independent organisation has done.
- It calls for an action relating to a particular individual, or organisation outside of the UK Government or Parliament

- It's defamatory or libellous, or contains false or unproven statements
- It refers to a case where there are active legal proceedings
- It contains material that may be protected by an injunction or court order
- It contains material that could be confidential or commercially sensitive
- It could cause personal distress or loss. This includes petitions that could intrude into someone's personal grief or shock without their consent
- It accuses an identifiable person or organisation of wrongdoing, such as committing a crime
- It names individual officials of public bodies, unless they are senior managers
- It names family members of elected representatives, eg MPs, or of officials of public bodies
- It asks for someone to be given an honour, or have an honour taken away. You can nominate someone for an honour here: [www.gov.uk/honours](http://www.gov.uk/honours)
- It asks for someone to be given a job, or to lose their job. This includes petitions calling for someone to resign and petitions asking for a vote of no confidence in an individual Minister or the Government as a whole
- It contains party political material
- It's nonsense or a joke
- It's an advert, spam, or promotes a specific product or service
- It's a Freedom of Information request
- It contains swearing or other offensive language
- It's offensive or extreme in its views. That includes petitions that attack, criticise or negatively focus on an individual or a group of people because of characteristics such as their age, disability, ethnic origin, gender identity, medical condition, nationality, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation

We publish the text of petitions that we reject, as long as they're not:

- defamatory, libellous or illegal in another way
- making false or unproven statements
- about a case there are active legal proceedings or about something that a court has issued an injunction over
- about an individual person or organisation, outside of the UK Government and Parliament
- offensive or extreme
- confidential or likely to cause personal distress. That includes petitions that could intrude into someone's personal grief or shock without their consent
- a joke, an advert or nonsense.

## RECALL PETITIONS

If an MP has been convicted of certain criminal offences or suspended from the House of Commons for at least 10 sitting days, they may be subject to a recall petition.

Petitions to recall Members of Parliament do not appear on this website and the Petitions Committee are not responsible for them. They are run locally, by the returning officer for your area, and have to be signed in person, by post or proxy. Your local authority will have issued a "notice of recall petition" on their website. This

will tell you how and when you can sign the petition.

## START A PETITION

To start a petition, [click here!](#)

## USEFUL LINKS

- Petitions: UK Government And Parliament: <https://petition.parliament.uk/>
- Start A Petition: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/new>
- Recall Petitions: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05089/>

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