

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

12th Meeting, 2023 (Session 6), Wednesday
6 September 2023

PE2027: Launch the Changing Places Toilet fund

Petitioner	Sarah Heward on behalf of The Tyndrum Infrastructure Group
Petition summary	Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to launch the £10M Changing Places Toilet fund that was pledged in the 2021 SNP manifesto without further delay and make the application process clear, straight-forward and expeditious for groups trying to build these much needed facilities.
Webpage	https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2027

Introduction

1. This is a new petition that was lodged on 18 May 2023.
2. A full summary of this petition and its aims can be found at **Annexe A**.
3. A SPICe briefing has been prepared to inform the Committee's consideration of the petition and can be found at **Annexe B**.
4. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 509 signatures have been received on this petition.
5. The Committee seeks views from the Scottish Government on all new petitions before they are formally considered. A response has been received from the Scottish Government and is included at **Annexe C** of this paper.
6. The Committee has also received a written submission from the petitioner and this is included at **Annexe D**.

Action

The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take on this petition.

Clerk to the Committee

Annexe A

PE2027: Launch the Changing Places Toilet fund

Petitioner

Sarah Heward on behalf of The Tyndrum Infrastructure Group

Date Lodged:

18/05/23

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to launch the £10M Changing Places Toilet fund that was pledged in the 2021 SNP manifesto without further delay and make the application process clear, straight-forward and expeditious for groups trying to build these much needed facilities.

Previous action

I sit on the Cross Party Group for Changing Places Toilets. At the CPG meeting on 2/11/22, I was given an official agenda slot to ask the Minister with responsibility for CPTs, Kevin Stewart, about the fund. I asked when the fund would be launched and for information about the application criteria. I didn't get firm answers.

I have written to Evelyn Tweed MSP, our constituent MSP, and Alyn Smith MP asking for advice about this petition and funding for the CPT. Again, I have not received firm answers. Alyn Smith MP has offered to write to the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, Maree Todd.

Background information

This application is on behalf a small community charity called The Tyndrum Infrastructure Group, whose primary aim is to build a Changing Places Toilet in Tyndrum.

We recently completed a Development Feasibility Study on our potential site which is at The Green Welly Stop. As a result, we now have a costed design plan, a signed Letter of Intent and a draft Memorandum of

Understanding. We are currently preparing to start the planning process with the National Park Authority.

Back in 2021, I attended a workshop co-hosted by Pamis¹ and CalMac. At the workshop, the number one priority location in Scotland for a Changing Places toilet was identified as Tyndrum.

There is currently a black hole the size of Wales in the North West of Scotland where no CPT toilet facilities exist. This situation does not seem representative of the kind of inclusive and accessible community that Scotland aspires to be. We need this CPT fund to be launched to access the money needed to address this in Tyndrum.

¹ Note by the Clerk: Pamis is a charity (Promoting a More Inclusive Society) that is a member of the Changing Places Consortium.

Annexe B

The logo for SPICe, featuring the text 'SPICe' in a white, sans-serif font on a dark purple background.The logo for The Information Centre, featuring the text 'The Information Centre' and 'An t-Ionad Fiosrachaidh' in a white, sans-serif font on a dark blue background.

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on PE2027, Launch the Changing Places Toilet fund, submitted by Sarah Heward on behalf of The Tyndrum Infrastructure Group

Background

Changing Places toilets: Changing Places toilets are a high standard of very accessible toilet, the technical specifications of which have been defined by the [Changing Places Consortium](#) campaign group. Changing Places facilities are different from regular accessible toilets and must include the following as standard:

- height-adjustable, adult-sized changing bench.
- ceiling track hoist system.
- adequate space for the disabled person and up to two assistants.
- toilet with space both sides for assistants.
- privacy screen.
- wide paper roll.
- large waste disposal bin.
- washbasin, preferably height adjustable.
- back rest on toilet seat.
- non-slip flooring.
- In addition, showers are recommended for managed buildings, such as leisure centres or transport hubs, but are not a requirement.

Building Standards requirements: All new buildings, conversions or extensions built in Scotland must meet the requirements set out in Schedule 5 of the Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004, as amended. These building standards, referred to as “functional standards”, describe the functions a building should perform, with Scottish Building Standard 3.12 stating:

“Every building must be designed and constructed in such a way that sanitary facilities are provided for all occupants of, and visitors to, the building in a form that allows convenience of use and that there is no threat to the health and safety of occupants or visitors.”

Detailed technical guidance for architects, engineers, and other building industry professionals on how to meet these requirements are provided in technical handbooks, which are published and regularly updated by the Scottish Government. There are separate handbooks for domestic and non-domestic buildings², reflecting the different requirements for each type of building.

The [2023 non-domestic technical handbook](#) states that changing places toilets should be fitted in new:

- retail premises, assembly, or entertainment buildings with a floorspace over 5,000m² or a capacity of more than 1,000 people, or where a building contains a swimming pool.
- hospitals.
- secondary schools providing community facilities.

Where a Changing Places toilet is not already present within a building, one should be provided where a building in any of the above categories is created by conversion or when the floorspace of such a building is extended by 25% or more.

Changing Places Toilet fund: The [SNP Manifesto 2021](#) included a commitment that:

“Over the next parliamentary term we will invest £10 million to increase the number of Changing Places toilets across the country and support mobile Changing Places toilets to allow people to access events or outdoor venues around the country.”

² A ‘non-domestic’ building is any building other than a house or block of flats, this includes shops, entertainment venues, hospitals, schools, offices, and factories.

This commitment was repeated in the [Programme for Government 2021-22](#).

Scottish Government Action

The Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport [wrote to the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee](#) on 8 June about this petition, highlighting

“...that Scotland is facing the most difficult public spending environment that this devolved parliament has ever seen...Therefore, funding for the construction of Changing Places Toilets has not yet been allocated and the timeframes for the distribution of this funding have not yet been announced. Further information on this investment will be available over the course of this parliamentary term.”

Scottish Parliament Action

The Scottish Parliament has, to date, not considered the launch of the Changing Places Toilet fund in any detail.

Alan Rehfisch
Senior Researcher
28 August 2023

SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in petition briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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Annexe C

Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport submission of 8 June 2023

PE2027/A: Launch the Changing Places Toilet fund

The Scottish Government knows that Changing Places Toilets make a real difference to disabled people and their families and wants to see greater provision of these vital facilities across Scotland. The provision of these fundamental facilities offers everyone in Scotland dignity and freedom.

Our [Programme for Government 2021-22](#) set out Scottish Government's ambition to invest in Changing Places Toilets over this parliamentary term, in order to increase the number of these facilities across the country and support mobile Changing Places Toilets to allow people easier access to events and outdoor venues.

This fund would build on work we have already done to amend Scottish Building Regulations legislation requiring the provision of Changing Places Toilets in larger new buildings to which the public have access.

Earlier this year, Scottish Government published the [First Ministers policy prospectus](#). This document sets out that Scotland is facing the most difficult public spending environment that this devolved parliament has ever seen.

We have had to make tough decisions to ensure that we target every pound we spend and invest in order to get the maximum value, ensuring it reaches those that need it the most.

Therefore, funding for the construction of Changing Places Toilets has not yet been allocated and the timeframes for the distribution of this funding have not yet been announced. Further information on this investment will be available over the course of this parliamentary term.

Local Authorities remain able to fund local community projects as they see fit from within local budgets.

Maree Todd MSP

Annexe D

Petitioner submission of 25 August 2023

PE2027/B: Launch the Changing Places Toilet fund

We wish to submit the following information in support of our ongoing petition asking for Changing Places funding to be made available at the earliest opportunity.

Since submitting our petition, our Changing Place Toilet design for Tyndrum has been submitted for planning at The Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park planning department with an outcome expected imminently.

The charity, The Tyndrum Infrastructure Group who lodged the petition, has been awarded funds to proceed with the building warrant once planning is granted.

Once we receive planning consent which we expect to be forthcoming in September, the only thing preventing us for building the facility will be a lack of capital funding.

We have proceeded to this point through a lengthy process of hard work by volunteers because we believed that the capital funding promised in the SNP 2021 Manifesto would have been ring fenced and be forthcoming. After all, a lot is spoken about an inclusive and equal society in Scotland but there is nothing at all inclusive or equal about not being able to go to the toilet.

Through our time spent campaigning we have heard many horror stories of what happens to disabled people and their carers if there are no Changing Places toilets available. Disabled children often face the indignity of being changed on public toilet floors, as they grow older they may have to be changed in the back of cars. Disabled children turn into disabled teenagers and adults, they sometimes can no longer be physically lifted by carers and so end up sitting in their own body fluids for prolonged periods of time, isolated in their own homes or dehydrating themselves in order that they do not need to use toilet facilities while they are out and about. There are even disabled women who have resorted to having clinically unnecessary surgery to have suprapubic catheters fitted because of a lack of adequate toilet facilities in their

communities. The above puts disabled people at risk of developing infections, of developing pressure ulcers, and all have a potential negative impact on the mental health of many disabled people.

In addition to the above, carers both paid and unpaid, are also put at the risk of serious harm, as they physically lift disabled people, in direct contravention of guidance set out by the Health & Safety executive (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/healthservices/moving-handling.htm>). These carers include parents, community nurses, teachers and more. The guidance from the Health and Safety Executive explicitly states:

“Poor moving and handling practice can lead to:

- back pain and musculoskeletal disorders, which can lead to inability to work
- moving and handling accidents – which can injure both the person being moved and the employee
- discomfort and a lack of dignity for the person being moved

You must take action to prevent or minimise the risk of injury”.

Whilst the Scottish Parliament have already acted in making the provision of Changing Places toilets mandatory in larger public buildings, we still have a long way to go before we have toileting equity. It would therefore, be a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act (2010) to make the funding available that was already promised. Where this has been done in England it has made a huge difference for disabled people in many communities. It has given them the opportunity to access social, medical, cultural and educational opportunities that were previously closed to them. While this will be an expenditure in the short-term, it can be seen as an investment in the long term. The disabled “Purple Pound” was estimated to equate to £249 billion back in 2019 (<https://wearepurple.org.uk/understanding-the-purple-pound-market/>), these are your potential tourists, your potential customers.

Finally, please see evidence of the desperate need for these facilities in the words of a few of the people that need them.

A previous petition, set up by Lorna Fillingham in 2015 collected many hundreds of comments, the full list can be found at <http://bit.ly/toilets4all>

All these comments other than the first were made by Scottish citizens.

“I work with SN children. The amount of trips we have gone on and there have been no changing facilities – going from changing them

on our knees, to using the floor, to 3 people having to help manoeuvre onto the floor out of the individual's chair”

“It is inhumane to go out with family & friends & have to sit in a dirty and/or wet pad for hours or stop your trip early because there is not a suitable place for you to go to the toilet”

“I am a health professional that works with disabled children and I see parents’ health deteriorate because of moving and handling of their children and the social recluse they slowly become because the facilities are not there”

“I work in the care sector and have been stunned at the time it takes to plan an outing for someone who cannot transfer to a toilet. It shouldn't be the case that I have to plan outings for people based on toilet facilities rather than what the person would actually like to do”

“My nephew ... requires catheters every 3 hours and needs appropriate space to do this. He has outgrown the change tables so the only option at the present is to lie him on the floor. Not sure you would want to lie on the floor of a public lavatory but I sure wouldn't.”

“Disabled children have enough challenges without having to face this humiliation. Parents and carers need to have safe, hygienic facilities”.

“I support young adults with complex physical difficulties and many times had to use toilet floors for personal care. Having to change on toilet floors is undignified and unhygienic”

You can change disabled people’s lives, and that of their carers, by making the promised investment available, and it needs to be made available at the earliest opportunity. It's the 21st century – no one should have to lie on a public toilet floor.