

PE2138/A: Make publicly owned buildings accessible for people with colour blindness

Gordon MacDonald MSP written submission, 30 May 2025

Gordon notes the subject matter of the petition; however, he seeks that the Committee note that colour blindness can affect citizens in many ways and all public bodies and institutions should make every effort to minimise its effects to the public.

By way of an example, a constituent found that having completed the studies to sit a Higher-Grade Geography Exam, that there was no aid to assist her daughter read a compulsory question relating to map details. The question could only be answered by identifying colours on a map.

The question was worth 20 of 100 marks in the paper and thus seriously disadvantaged the student, consequently harmed her ability to seek admission to University, and get on the course she sought.

Whilst map reading skills may be a necessary part of a Higher Geography Exam, and the maps may have to be in colour, if there is no viable aid for a colour blind student, both the public bodies that are the SQA and the Local Education Department/School should assess the content of all courses and possible exam questions and advise prospective colour blind students if this is the best choice of subject to meets their needs and aspirations.

Noting that circa 4.5% of the population may suffer from colour blindness, such an assessment as to the suitability of a course and exam material should be made for all subjects to lessen the chances of any disadvantage occurring to colour blind students.