

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Wednesday 28 January 2026
3rd Meeting, 2026 (Session 6)

PE2020: Provide fertility treatment to single women

Introduction

Petitioner Anne-Marie Morrison

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide the same fertility treatment to single women, as is offered to couples on the NHS for the chance to have a family.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2020>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 21 May 2025](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health.
2. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
3. The Committee has received a new written submission from the Scottish Government which is set out in **Annexe C**.
4. [Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage](#).
5. [Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.
6. [The Scottish Government gave its initial response to the petition on 18 May 2023](#).
7. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 202 signatures have been received on this petition.

Action

8. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
January 2026

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE2020: Provide fertility treatment to single women

Petitioner

Anne-Marie Morrison

Date Lodged

23 March 2023

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide the same fertility treatment to single women, as is offered to couples on the NHS for the chance to have a family.

Previous action

I have contacted MSPs; MPs; the NHS; private doctors; private sperm banks; newspapers; radio stations; and local authorities.

Background information

I am a single 36 year old woman. I have been trying to fight this cause for a number of years at the detriment of my own age and fertility abilities. I'm hopeful to be a mother and know thousands in my position who cannot safely find a donor. This needs to be actioned for safe and kinder support to women seeking to become mothers.

There is an appearance of absolute discrimination here against single people wanting a family, creating a huge risk to women, men and babies' health and safety if they are left to find street sperm donors from among the general public.

At the time of publishing, 574 signatures have been gathered through a separate petition on Change.org.

Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE2020 on 21 May 2025

The Convener: Agenda item 2 is consideration of continued petitions. With just less than a year of the parliamentary session left, the committee's ability to extend its work on petitions is now slightly more circumscribed, because, by the time we get responses, we could be short of time to fully consider them. We are considering petitions as sensibly as we can so that we can advance their aims as best we can. I hope that those who have lodged petitions will understand that.

Our first petition is PE2020, lodged by Anne-Marie Morrison, which calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide the same fertility treatment to single women as is offered to couples on the national health service for the chance to have a family. We last considered the petition on 1 May 2024, when we agreed to write to Public Health Scotland and the national fertility group.

The national fertility group's response highlighted that access to NHS in vitro fertilisation treatment in Scotland is the most generous in the United Kingdom and it noted that, in 2021, Scotland had the highest rate of NHS-funded IVF cycles in the UK at 58 per cent, compared to 30 per cent in Wales and just 24 per cent in England.

Last April, Public Health Scotland presented its modelling work, which aimed to increase understanding of the eligibility, demand and cost implications for changes to national access criteria for NHS fertility treatment, including IVF treatment and intrauterine insemination for single people.

The national fertility group's submission stated that further work is still to be done in order to understand capacity implications. The group will then discuss the modelling implications and consider whether a change recommendation could be supported in the medium to long term.

There is quite a lot of work going on. In light of that, do colleagues have any suggestions for action?

Fergus Ewing (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP): I note that our two responses are from the national fertility group, dated 4 July 2024; and from Public Health Scotland, dated 8 May, which was barely two weeks ago. I also understand that we have not heard from the petitioner and I am keen that she should have a proper opportunity to respond to the latest comment from Public Health Scotland.

As you alluded to, Scotland has a better record on IVF than elsewhere in the UK, which is commendable and a matter of some satisfaction. However, according to the petitioner, the elapse of time makes the whole objective of achieving and giving life much more challenging, particularly for single women. Time has passed—a couple of years—since the petition was submitted.

Last week, we spent a lot of time talking about the ending of life. The gift of life is the biggest gift that there can possibly be. Therefore, I think that, first, the petitioner should have an opportunity to comment, if she wishes to do so. Secondly, the replies

from the national fertility group and particularly from Public Health Scotland were somewhat vague and talked solely about process. They gave no idea of when the various items of work that they alluded to were to begin or finish, and that is surely not satisfactory.

I suggest that we also write to the minister, simply to ask whether clarity can be provided as to when all that work will come to an end. While congratulating the NHS and all who are involved in the good things that are being achieved, we should also urge that much more be done to help women, particularly single women, who the petitioner believes and perceives are not able to access services as they should—although that point is contested. That would be a full response to the petition, which is a very important one.

The Convener: We could do two tightly focused pieces of work with a view to bringing the petition back sooner rather than later. We could ask the petitioner for their response and write a straightforward letter to the minister to draw their attention to the work that we have done and ask for an urgent ministerial response so that we can determine what more we can do with the petition. Are colleagues content with that?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Annexe C: Written submission

Scottish Government written submission, 25 June 2025

PE2020/F: Provide fertility treatment to single women

Thank you for your letter of 28 May 2025 in relation to public petition [PE2020: Provide fertility treatment to single women](#) calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide the same fertility treatment to single women, as is offered to couples through the NHS for the chance to have a family.

As the Committee will be aware from the previous Scottish Government response dated 18 May 2023, access criteria for NHS IVF treatment in Scotland is set at a national level and initial discussions on any proposed changes to access criteria for NHS IVF treatment take place within the National Fertility Group. The group brings together experts in their field, to consider clinical research, evidence and data and make recommendations to Scottish Ministers who make the final decisions in relation to access criteria.

In that letter we also advised that Public Health Scotland (PHS), in their role as members of the National Fertility Group, were working collaboratively to use modelling techniques which will enable the group to better understand the capacity implications of any future expansion of access to NHS IVF to single people.

At the National Fertility Group meeting that took place on 29 April 2024, PHS colleagues presented the results of their modelling in relation to the work they carried out to better understand the eligibility, demand and cost implications of any future expansion of NHS IVF treatment, including Intrauterine Insemination (IUI) for single people. They also advised that there was still further work to be done to better understand the capacity implications for the four NHS Assisted Conception Units (ACUs), which would involve reconciling demand against capacity.

At the National Fertility Group meeting on 17 September 2024, PHS provided a recap on the demand modelling that had been completed earlier in the year and provided some further information on capacity and cost modelling. It was subsequently agreed that Scottish Government and PHS would discuss further work on capacity modelling in regard to the possibility of expanding NHS IVF treatment to single people.

That discussion took place on 4 December 2024 and it was agreed that the Scottish Government would consider commissioning PHS to carry out capacity modelling for the expansion of IVF access criteria to include single people. Scottish Government policy officials have started discussions with colleagues in the PHS sponsorship team on the commissioning process to get approval for a PHS team to be allocated to this work.

Timescales are dependent on PHS work plans for this financial year.

Once this work is completed the National Fertility Group would then need to schedule time to properly discuss the modelling implications and consider whether

they would support a criteria change recommendation in the medium to longer term as an aspiration when health budgets could support the increase in funding this would require. These conversations are likely to take place in early 2026.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Improving Health and Wellbeing Division