



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

**PUBLIC PETITION NO.**

**PE01787**

### **Name of petitioner**

Sandra Docherty

### **Petition title**

The use of Makaton sign language in the legal system

### **Petition summary**

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure that all parts of the legal system use Makaton sign language.

### **Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition**

I have raised this issue with my MSP.

### **Petition background information**

At present, people with speech disabilities, who are unable to use British Sign Language (BSL), struggle to access the legal system. Social work departments can carry out adult protection enquires, which is fair enough but getting an incident to court is impossible for people with speech disabilities.

People with communication problems need to be supported to access the justice system when they require it. If people are unable to give days, dates, times, places of a crime, they cannot get full police involvement in a case, so the legal system needs to be able to come to their level of ability, to give them a power to be heard. For many, Makaton, which is a language programme that uses symbols, signs and speech, is an easier way to communicate than BSL.

All parts of the justice system should ensure that people of all abilities can access them. Ensuring that the legal system can use Makaton sign language will allow people with speech disabilities to be heard and more importantly understood.

### **Unique web address**

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01787>

### **Related information for petition**

**Related information for petition**

**Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?**

NO

**How many signatures have you collected so far?**

0

**Closing date for collecting signatures online**

N/A

**Comments to stimulate online discussion**