

PE1707/F

Petitioner submission of 23 May 2019

Firstly, thank you for taking the time to listen to my petition at the end of last year. Just taking the time to listen to my concerns has led to an increased awareness of AEDs and I believe a number of questions have been asked about AEDs in parliament since then, including to the SPCB regarding AEDs within the parliament building. Fundamentally, I want to see more AEDs across Scotland and to make the general public feel comfortable using one if the need arises. I do not claim that my petition is a silver bullet, but is one way forward in increasing the number of AEDs in public places.

I note from some responses to my petition that there seems to be a lack of evidence that my proposal would work. It would seem logical then to test my proposal. Countries like Sweden are mentioned as examples regarding what they are doing around the subject of AEDs. Would it not be great if we legislated in this area and countries around the world were talking about Scotland and what we have done?

My motivation is obviously to honour the memory of my son and try and make it less likely that a situation like the one my family has suffered happens again. There was a defibrillator in the building, but no one seemed to know where it was and was confident to use it. Increasing the number of AEDs does not only mean more AEDs will be available, but it will surely increase public awareness of these lifesaving devices. Below, please see some comments I have in response to each of the petition response you have received.

British Heart Foundation

- We need to normalise AEDs across the country. Are they saying it is a bad thing to have more AEDs, regardless of where they are sited?
- We need to increase the number, no matter where. I very much welcome the Edinburgh University study into where the best locations are, but what my petition is trying to accomplish can complement and work alongside this piece of work.
- At present we know there are not enough AEDs. Due to this, we cannot categorically say one way or the other whether or not they would reduce the number of deaths from OHCA, but I think we can argue that having more would save more lives.
- Again, the more we have, the more familiar people become with them. Having them on the outside of buildings means people know where they are and can use them whether inside the building or outside on the street. No one used the AED which was on site on the day of Jayden's passing as no one was sure where it was or how to use it. We need to make sure this doesn't happen again.

Caithness Defibrillator Campaign Group

- I agree that in conjunction with the aims of my petitions, we need to do some work around the registration of AEDs, the maintenance and governance. Again, increasing the number of AEDs I believe will help with this.

- Groups gifting AEDs is well intentioned, but doesn't mean they will be maintained. Also, it makes it very random where they are located. Legislating will make it a more regulated approach to where and how AEDs are located.

Resuscitation Council (UK)

- The point is made that 'Survival can be increased significantly by the early use of CPR and automated external defibrillators (AEDs), referred to as public access defibrillators (PADs) when made available for use by the public.' The more AEDs there are, the more likely someone who suffers from an OHCA will be near a AED and potentially save their life.
- I accept the point about the 7500sqm size. This was a figure we came up with as a starting point, but is not set in stone and this can be lowered. The main thing is about increasing the number of AEDs in every corner of Scotland.
- 'The RC (UK) does not have evidence that specifically making PAD a legal requirement would be sufficient to increase rates of bystander CPR, defibrillation and therefore improve rates of survival after cardiac arrest.' It would seem logically to say that there is no evidence because we haven't been able to test this. Why not test it in Scotland. Surely nothing negative can come of this.
- Regarding footprint verses footfall, I weighed this up before writing my petition and I thought footprint was the best way to go. However, I would be happy to work towards using footfall. Yet, I did not want to see ever shop on the high street with a AED on the outside after a refurbishment, hence the reason for choosing footprint. Again, I accept that 7500sqm is probably too big.

St Andrew's First Aid

- Thank you for the comments. I think they understand that I am trying to see more AEDs across the country and this can only be a good thing.

Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing

- Helpful comments on planning and the Edinburgh University study. I would be happy for both these pieces of work to inform my petition as we go forward, but ultimately, my petition is about increasing the number of AEDs and putting them on all new or refurbished building over a certain size/ or with a certain footfall seems very much like a step in the right direction.

I would be more than happy to return to the petition committee to speak about my petition further.