Aberdeenshire
Health & Social Care
Partnership

ABERDEENSHIRE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

GUIDANCE ON PETITIONS

The Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board (IJB) is committed to openness, transparency and meaningful engagement with the people and communities it serves. One way in which individuals, community groups and stakeholders can participate in the democratic process is through the submission of petitions.

This Guidance explains how petitions may be submitted to the IJB, the information which must be provided, and how petitions will be considered by the Board. The petition process provides a formal mechanism for members of the public to ask the IJB to consider matters that fall within its remit and to draw attention to issues that are important to local communities.

The purpose of the Guidance is to ensure that petitions are handled in a fair, consistent and transparent manner while supporting effective decision-making by the IJB. It should be read alongside the IJB Governance Handbook and Standing Orders, which set out the formal procedures governing petitions and public participation. The Guidance is intended to assist petitioners in understanding the process and to help ensure that petitions can be considered efficiently and appropriately by the Board.

The submission of a petition does not guarantee that the IJB will take a particular course of action. However, all competent petitions will be considered in accordance with the procedures set out in the Governance Handbook, ensuring that the views of the public can be heard and taken into account in the Board's deliberations.

1. Why petition?

A petition is a formal written request to the IJB in respect of a particular cause. Taking part in a petition is one way that members of the public can raise awareness of a particular issue that they want the IJB to consider and it can have a positive outcome by creating informed and open debate on the matter.

Submitting a petition does not guarantee the action sought will be achieved but it is an important tool for communities to raise awareness of matters that are important to them.

2. Things to consider before submitting a petition

Before submitting a petition, you should consider whether there are any other forums that could resolve your issue. You should ask yourself the following question:-

- Have you raised the issue with the relevant Service directly, e.g. as an email, comment or complaint?

Where other avenues have been pursued you should advise the IJB of the outcome when you submit your petition.

3. Who can submit a petition?

You can submit a petition if you are an individual who lives in Aberdeenshire or a local business owner or voluntary organisation.

4. Who can sign a petition?

A petition can be signed by any person however only signatures with an Aberdeenshire address will be considered when calculating whether the petition meets the minimum number of signatures.

The petitioner must also complete and submit a petition submission form (attached to this Guidance as Appendix A) and ensure that the declaration within that form has been completed when submitting the petition confirming that the information contained within the petition is true and genuine.

5. How many signatures are required?

The minimum number of signatories required is 100.

Fewer signatories may be accepted in exceptional circumstances e.g. where the issue concerns a small community which could not reasonably be expected to raise at least 100 signatories. The Chair of the IJB, will decide if this exception is to apply.

6. What should a petition contain?

A petition must include the following information:

- The title or subject matter of the petition.
- A short statement of no more than 250 words which details what action the petitioner wishes the IJB to take.
- The principal petitioner's name, address, contact details including email address and telephone number.
- Whether the petitioner also wishes to speak at a Meeting where the petition will be heard and discussed ("Request to Speak").

7. A petition will not be accepted if:

- It is not accompanied by a completed petition submission form to ensure all information is submitted.
- It contains false or defamatory statements or offensive or inappropriate language.
- It includes information protected by or relating to a court order or interdict.
- It contains the names of individual officers of public bodies.
- Similar or identical petitions have been considered by the IJB in the past 24 months.
- The issues raised do not fall within the IJB's powers and remit.

You should take care not to include any information in the petition that you would not wish to be publicly available.

8. E-petitions

The IJB will accept e-petitions or petitions hosted by an online facility if they meet the criteria set out in this guidance. Where the e-petition is managed by an external provider and the e-petition submitted to the IJB does not contain the addresses of the signatories, a statement should be provided by the external provider confirming that the minimum threshold of 100 signatories with Aberdeenshire addresses has been met. This should be provided at the same time the e-petition is submitted.

9. Where should I send my petition?

The petition together with a completed submission form (attached as Appendix A) to this guidance, should be sent to:

The Chief Officer of the Health & Social Care Partnership c/o
Committee Services
Aberdeenshire Council
Woodhill House
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB

Alternatively a legible, electronic copy of the petition and submission form can be emailed to committee.services@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

10. Timescales for submission of petition.

(A) Where your petition relates to an item on an IJB Agenda

If your petition relates to an item already listed on the agenda of an upcoming IJB meeting your petition must be received by the Chief Officer, through Committee Services no later than noon on the Friday before the date of the meeting.

(B) Where your petition relates to an item not on a Meeting Agenda

If your petition does not relate to an item already listed on the agenda of an upcoming IJB meeting, your petition must be received by the Chief Officer, through Committee Services no later than noon, fourteen calendar days before the next meeting. This additional time will enable your petition to be added as an additional agenda item if deemed competent and relevant.

11. What happens after I've submitted my petition?

Your petition will be considered by the Chair of the IJB. They will consider whether your petition complies with the requirements set out above and also whether it can be considered by the IJB as a competent and relevant matter.

Matters that will not be considered include the following:

- A matter that is considered commercially sensitive or confidential.
- Employee terms and conditions of employment.
- Matters that are the subject of any current court proceedings.
- Matters which would disclose exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

If your petition is not accepted, you will be notified of the reasons why.

If your petition is accepted, you will be notified of the date and time of the IJB meeting at which it will be considered.

12. What happens at the meeting?

Prior to the meeting a written report will have been prepared explaining that you have submitted the petition and setting out the procedure to be followed. This will have been published with the rest of the agenda for the meeting and will be available online on Aberdeenshire Council's website.

On the day of the meeting the relevant officer will present the report to the members of the IJB. If you have indicated on the submission form that you

wish to speak at the meeting, the IJB members will first decide whether or not to accept your request. If they allow it, you will have a period of up to five minutes to present your petition to the members present.

You can arrange for someone to represent you at the meeting provided you notify Committee Services in advance via the following email address: committee.services@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Once you have spoken, the IJB members may ask you questions about your petition, the background to it and the action you want the IJB to take.

The IJB members will have two options:-

1. They can simply **note the terms of your petition,** and **do nothing further**. This may be where the members consider that no action can be taken in relation to the matter you have raised. In these circumstances, the process will be at an end and your petition will not be taken any further; or

2. If members consider that your petition requires further consideration:

    a. where a related report is already on the agenda, the petition may be considered alongside that report; or
    b. they may instruct the Chief Officer **to bring a report to a future meeting**.

Members cannot make a substantive decision on the matter until they have considered a detailed report.

The members will make their decision at the meeting and, if you are not personally present, that decision will be notified to you in writing, together with the reasons why the decision was made.

13. What happens next?

If the IJB members have instructed a report for a further meeting, then you will be advised of the date and time of the next meeting.

The report on the subject matter of your petition will be presented to a future meeting and the IJB members present at that meeting will consider the matter and determine what action to take. In doing so, they will consider the following factors;

- Is there work already ongoing regarding the matter that could ultimately resolve the issue?
- Has a decision previously been taken by the IJB that is contrary to the action sought?
- Is there budget available?

Any decision made by the members of the IJB regarding your petition will be notified formally to you.

14. Where to seek advice?

If you require any further information about submitting a petition or any further guidance about the process by which a petition may be heard, please use the contact details below:

Committee Services
Aberdeenshire Council
Woodhill House
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB
Email: committee.services@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX A

Aberdeenshire
Health & Social Care
Partnership

PETITION SUBMISSION FORM

Details of the Principal Petitioner	
Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Telephone Number:	
Email:	

Subject Matter / Title of Petition

Petition Statement (Maximum of 250 words detailing what action the Petitioner wishes the Integration Joint Board to take)**:**

What action (if any) has been taken to resolve the issue <u>before</u> submitting the petition?

Other Proceedings	
Please indicate whether any of the following apply to the issue concerned.	
Are the issue(s) raised in the petition currently being dealt with by the Health & Social Care Partnership?	Yes / No
Have the issues raised been dealt with by the IJB in the past?	Yes / No
Are the issue(s) raised subject to any legal proceedings?	Yes / No

Request to Speak	
A petitioner may request to speak about their petition at the meeting of the IJB. The decision whether to hear from speakers is made by the Board. Please indicate below whether you wish to have the opportunity to speak about your petition.	
	I DO wish to make a request to address the members of the IJB.
	I DO NOT wish to make a request to address the members of the IJB.

Number of Signatures on the Petition	
Total number of signatures on petition:	
Number of signatures on petition with an address in Aberdeenshire:	

Declaration of Principal Petitioner	
I declare that the information provided by me on the above form, and within the attached petition, is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.	
Signature:	
Print Name:	
Date:	