

The decision to reduce the open period for e-petitions from 12 to 6 months was taken by the House of Commons Procedure Committee. They undertook a detailed inquiry into e-petitions, the recommendations of which were published in their report [E-petitions: a collaborative system](#).

They acted on evidence from Professor Helen Margetts and her colleagues at the Oxford Internet Institute at Oxford University. They carried out research on the success rate of petitions on the old Government e-petitions website.

Her research showed that the majority of e-petitions to reach 100,000 signatures do so in a very short space of time - usually within a few days.

As the Committee stated in their report:

'Reducing the period for which an e-petition remains open is therefore unlikely to have a significant effect on its ability to gather support, and will help to ensure that the site remains focussed on matters of current concern to the public' (page 25 of the report).

The decision to set a threshold of five supporters before an e-petition is published was also taken by the House of Commons Procedure Committee. It was noted in their report that around one in five e-petitions submitted in the 2010-15 Parliament received fewer than three signatures, and 42% fewer than six. E-petitions are ideally suited to raising issues of collective concern. The Procedure Committee felt, therefore, that introducing a threshold of five signatures would:

'leave more resources available to engage with those bringing forward well-supported petitions, and to ensure that as much information as possible is made available on the e-petitions website about what Parliament is doing in relation to the concerns raised.' (*E-petitions: a collaborative system*, p.22)

The e-petitions website is moderated by a small team of House of Commons staff who also correspond with petitioners and provide administrative support to the Petitions Committee. A large number of e-petitions are received each day, the moderation of which often involves additional research and fact checking.

You can find out about the work of the Petitions Committee on [our website](#).

Many thanks,

Sean Harris

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