



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01409

Name of petitioner

Linda Whitmore on behalf of ENABLE Scotland

Petition title

Bridging the Training Gap - Training for education staff on learning disabilities and autistic spectrum disorders

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure that all teachers and support staff are fully trained to provide the right additional support for children and young people with learning disabilities and/or autistic spectrum disorders in Scottish schools.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

- Bridging the Training Gap report published with information from local authorities and universities
- Meetings with civil servants to discuss the issue
- Raised as part of campaigning agenda for the Scottish Parliament election
- Presented report findings at 'for Scotland's Disabled Children' conference
- Engagement with the Donaldson Review of Teacher Education

Petition background information

This issue was first raised by ENABLE Scotland's Young Families Support Committee in 2010. They identified a basic lack of understanding of learning disability by some classroom teachers and support staff as being a major barrier to inclusion and a successful learning experience.

Information received from local authorities revealed that while many education authorities offer a wide range of courses on supporting children with learning disabilities in the mainstream classroom, very few make this training mandatory for all staff. In some areas, learning support assistants receive only basic training in subjects such as moving and handling and positive behaviour management.

The Scottish Government's Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland 2010 show that disabled students were almost twice as likely to be excluded from school than pupils without a disability and 5 times as likely to be excluded if they had additional support needs.

Along with this evidence, anecdotal stories collated from parents confirmed ENABLE Scotland's view that the reason many children with learning disabilities and/or autism are not being properly supported in the classroom is because education staff lack

awareness of the underlying issues contributing to challenging behaviour by these pupils and do not have strategies in place to successfully cope with this.

ENABLE Scotland is calling for the core curriculum of all initial teacher education courses at university to cover not only relevant legislation, policies and guidance but also how these translate into actual practice in the classroom so that newly qualified teachers can confidently support the education of all learners. This knowledge can then be built on throughout their career in mandatory CPD courses as outlined above. Support assistants should receive similar training on a mandatory basis, as they often provide much of the one-to-one support in the classroom to pupils with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01409>

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?

2447

Closing date for collecting signatures online

N/A

Comments to stimulate online discussion