



13th May 2009

Mrs Zoe Tough
Assistant Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Mrs. Tough

Petition PE1179 – Acquired Brain Injury

Thank you very much for inviting a response to the above petition from Momentum Scotland.

The specific issue raised is the proposal to establish a separate and distinct health and community client category of Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). As stated in the petition, ABI does not fit neatly into the present categories of physical disability, mental illness or learning disability. This leads to issues with resource provision for individuals and their families throughout Scotland, often with wide variation in both level and suitability of services being offered. At present families often report they have difficulty accessing appropriate services, which can lead to increasing problems and leave families facing both social and financial exclusion.

It is estimated that approximately 7,500 people in Scotland per annum are left with a disability as a result of ABI. Often those affected are young men as a result of, for example, road traffic accidents or assaults. After surviving the initial illness or injury the individual will often have a normal life expectancy, resulting in many years of living with a disability. ABI can result in individuals facing complex physical, cognitive and psychosocial difficulties, which can have a devastating affect on all areas of they and their family's lives.

Momentum Scotland is a national not for profit organisation that has supported and provided services for people with ABI and their families in Scotland for over fifteen years. Momentum Scotland established the first specialist brain injury

vocational service in the UK, based in Glasgow, and now has ABI services in Aberdeen, North Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire and the Borders. Previous research has shown that after ABI, return to employment can be very poor and that generic employment programmes often have limited success. However, with specialist support over 70% of people can return to work or further education.

Working with individuals with ABI and their families, Momentum became increasingly aware of the issues families and carers faced in the community and the distinct lack of services and support they received. Therefore Momentum has commenced to build local, community-based services, especially in rural areas such as Grampian and the Borders, which begins to address the needs of this client group.

Momentum Scotland offers a range of community and centre based services depending on the need of the individuals and families. These services work in partnership with health and social care professionals. In Grampian, for example, staff are active participants in the ABI Local Care Networks, which aim to improve services and services delivery to this client group and links with the National MCN. We also work closely with other national brain injury groups such as Headway and SHIF to promote good practice and the development of services.

Momentum Scotland and other brain injury support organisations agree that, in general, there has been an improvement of services for individuals and their families after ABI over the last five years, but this has been slow and uncoordinated. There are also increasing concerns that, given the current economic climate, on going funding for ABI Projects may become more difficult to sustain. However, if ABI had its own identity in terms of being a separate category for service planning, funding and delivery this would simplify and improve the pathway of care, service and service delivery for this group. Momentum Scotland therefore supports the main proposal in this petition for ABI to become a recognised separate condition by the statutory bodies in Scotland.

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Strachan
National Brain Injury Development Manager
Momentum Scotland