

PE1179/NN

Petitioner Letter of 18 June 2012

Alison Wilson
Assistant Clerk
Public Petitions Committee
T3.40
Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

18 June 2012

Dear Ms Wilson

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the information sent by councils, and the Scottish Government.

We were disappointed that out of the 32 councils in Scotland the committee only received responses from 12 councils. This tells us that Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) is not a priority issue on many councils' agendas and supports our initial points about it being "lost" and not planned for properly. However we are aware that some councils have not responded who have a well thought out strategy- such as West Dunbartonshire Council.

The quality of the responses varies and the level of jargon used in particular responses make them difficult to understand and sometimes give the impression that the respondent is covering up for a lack of action.

We notice many councils mentioning things which are not within their control - for example voluntary services that they do not financially contribute to, or NHS services which they are not involved in. Again these seem to be being mentioned to give a better impression of what is going on in a specific area than what is actually going on.

The councils seem to split fairly clearly between those which seem to say that the Client Centred and personalisation approach is the way to go and this could be applied as a generic service with no need to have an specialist knowledge, and those which have a properly planned out strategy that does use this approach but within a framework of understanding about ABI, and a plan for using the service.

It can be seen from the responses where ABI sits in different areas too- in Mental Health in some areas, physical disability in others, in Older Peoples in other areas.

So again this supports our initial points that ABI is treated differently across different areas and is liable to be lost.

The final general point is that in these responses there is a lack of a basic understanding in many of them about the terminology of ABI - for example mixing it up with Alcohol Related Brain Damage, using the terms Traumatic Head Injury, as if it was separate to Acquired Brain Injury. We realise that not everyone is an expert, but feel that in a response to the Scottish Parliament people should be checking their facts. Again this supports our point that ABI is not understood properly at planning level.

One third of the councils who responded agreed with our original premise that there should be a separate care category and that this would help with planning and spending of money. The others did not mention this point.

We particularly want to highlight the responses from Aberdeen Council, Dumfries and Stirling and Clackmannanshire. These councils all seem to have a strategy for ABI and a range of approaches within this for working with individuals with ABI and families. The responses are also the best written as they seem to have something to say and are not covering up for inaction. They also have different types of geographical area, but have adapted to local circumstances.

Aberdeen Council had set up Managed Care Networks for ABI, which link to the National MCN, and local MCNs in their area. This allows the adaption to local circumstances to work properly. We do wish to see this approach applied across Scotland - but there is no evidence in many other council areas that this is an approach that people are even considering.

If we are allowed to suggest recommendation for future action then we would ask:

1. That a separate care category be set up for ABI so that spending on ABI services can be ring fenced, and monitored.
2. That all councils and Health boards together be directed to develop a current ABI strategy, along with consultation with their local ABI population and carers.
3. That all councils and Health boards be directed to begin the set-up of local Managed Care Networks for ABI, so that the approaches used with individuals are within a context that will allow proper support.

Yours truly

Helen Moran
Chairperson
BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN