



PE1460/B

23 January 2013

Andrew Howlett
Assistant Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Mr Howlett

Re: PE01460: Improvement of services and resources to tackle chronic pain

Thank you for your letter dated 10 January 2013, requesting our views on Public Petition PE01460 on improvement of services and resources to tackle chronic pain. The ALLIANCE is the national third sector intermediary for a range of health and social care organisations. Our vision is for a Scotland where people who are disabled or living with long term conditions and unpaid carers have a strong voice and enjoy their right to live well.

Chronic pain is a long term condition in its own right, as well as being associated with many other long term conditions. Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS)¹ describe chronic pain as “continuous, long-term pain lasting more than 12 weeks or pain persisting after the time that healing would have been expected to occur after trauma or injury.” The recent Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) draft guidelines points to evidence that as many as 18% of the population may be affected by moderate to severe pain at some point in their lives.

The ALLIANCE would like to Committee to note our general support for the views expressed in the petition. The ALLIANCE would express particular concern about

¹ Healthcare Improvement Scotland, 2012, Update Report on Scottish Pain Management Services, http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/media/CLT/ResourceUploads/4021875/Scottish%20Pain%20Management%20Services_Update%20Report_Oct2012.pdf

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the disparity in the range of services and resources to tackle chronic pain available in different parts of Scotland.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland² report that “pain is not consistently managed across the whole health and social care system at present... In some areas, there is a well-defined chronic pain service that can specify funding and staffing for chronic pain. In other boards, staffing and resources are shared across services that support a range of conditions.” We are concerned that this has had the knock on effect of creating a significant variability of provision across Scotland which may have a negative impact in ensuring the best possible treatment for chronic pain in each area.

The ALLIANCE supports the petition in calling for a greater emphasis to be placed the management of chronic pain in primary care. In 2007, the NHS QIS (now Healthcare Improvement Scotland) “Getting to GRIPS with Chronic Pain in Scotland” report³ noted that “the provision of chronic pain services within Scotland is patchy and fragmented particularly for core secondary services. Service provision and access to services varies considerably between and within NHS Boards and we found little evidence of needs assessment or strategic planning for chronic pain services.”

NHS Boards are now expected to develop chronic pain services in line with the Scottish Service Model for Chronic Pain. One of the expected outputs of this implementation is a greater level of chronic pain management in primary care, rather than in secondary care settings. The Committee should note that each NHS Board has been invited to bid for up to £100,000 over the next two years in order to assist them in improving their services in line with the Scottish Service Model for Chronic Pain.

The Committee has previously noted the importance of self management in helping people with chronic pain to better manage their condition and the impact it has on their daily lives. The ALLIANCE is responsible for managing the Self Management Fund which is funded by the Scottish Government to encourage good practice to be shared and innovative approaches developed so that people with long term conditions have access to the support they need to successfully manage their lives.

Some examples of projects funded by the first Self Management Fund that related to pain and pain management included:

- **Action for M.E.** – developed an online ‘hub’ as an information and support resource for those living with M.E. This enabled people with M.E., their families and carers to access peer support, information and education to help them manage their condition including pain management and therapies

² *ibid.*

³ http://nationalpinaudit.org/media/files/GRIPS_booklet.pdf



- **PSALV** – designed, developed and delivered a psoriasis specific self management programme. This course focused on pain management for those living with psoriatic arthritis.
- **Ayrshire Cancer Support** – have delivered 16 workshop sessions, with 3 aimed solely at NHS staff, with 115 attendees teaching relaxation and hypnotherapy techniques which have increased the ability to relax, reduced anxiety, improved sleep and reduced stress.

For more information please contact Andrew Strong, Policy and Information Officer on 0141 404 0231 or andrew.strong@alliance-scotland.org.uk

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Yours sincerely

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