

**PE1732/D**

Petitioner submission of 17 December 2019

We thank both the Scottish Government and NAS Scotland for their detailed response.

However, we are extremely concerned that the wording suggests that PDA is a 'learnt behaviour' and also that it has been suggested that instead a toolkit on reducing anxiety in autism might be more appropriate.

This is very misleading to those Professionals, service providers etc who do not have an in-depth knowledge of PDA.

PDA is 'anxiety driven with a need to be in control'. This is not general anxiety but a real avoidance of demands to such an extent that they will go to extreme measures to avoid the demand being placed on them. Stating that it is a 'learned behaviour' implies that it can be unlearned which we know as parents/individuals with lived experience that that is certainly not the case.

The recent statement from the NAS contradicts the NAS Scotland submission <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/pda.aspx>

Therefore, can we as the Petition Clerks strongly suggest that Ministers consider contacting the PDA Society for their input as whoever the Scottish Government contacted were obviously not a leading expert in the field of PDA by the response received by yourselves .

Early intervention is key with PDA as the wrong support/strategies being used lead to the long term detrimental impact on a persons emotional, mental, social and physical wellbeing.

It also impacts on the wider circle and significantly on family life with siblings, parents, carers all affected to a huge degree and takes years to unpick the torture of torment of being in the wrong environment with the incorrect support and strategies being in place.

Early and accurate diagnosis must surely be a priority and along with appropriate interventions will identify those living with PDA to help them to achieve their full potential in life. It will also provide relief to their families, friends and carers and reduce costs to the NHS and support services . We the petitioners believe that the Scottish Government is in danger of falling well behind developments by its present rigid adherence to international standards and guidelines.