

**PE1837/A**

Scottish Government submission of 2 December 2020

Thank you for your email of 4 November seeking advance views on the above petition. Please see below.

**Clarify how autistic people, who do not have a learning disability and/or mental disorder, can access support.**

Support for autistic people is available from a wide range of sources, including health and social care partnerships, national organisations like Scottish Autism and the National Autistic Society for Scotland and local organisations including autistic led organisations. They provide a range of support including social groups, 1:1 counselling and post diagnostic support.

Following our Programme for Government commitment in September 2019, the Scottish Government is working collaboratively with the national autism charities and autistic led organisations to deliver a national autism post diagnostic support service for people diagnosed within the past two years. Following a diagnosis of autism, individuals, parents and carers living across Scotland will be routed to appropriate support. That support will enable individuals to understand, embrace and develop their identity as an autistic person. It will also aim to ensure that parents and carers will have access to information, support and advice to enable them to support their child's development and personal growth. We also want to make sure that those with a late diagnosis can access support, including peer support.

This is a pilot project running from December 2020 – May 2021, with the pilot then being independently evaluated and decisions being made on the further development of the service.

The Scottish Government established the [National Autism Implementation Team](#), in partnership with Queen Margaret University, to support Health and Social Care Partnerships to consider best practice and improve service in the redesigning of autism diagnostic services. The National Implementation Team is supporting NHS Boards to examine diagnostic pathways for autism and establish regional experts to assist with improving tiered autism specialisms across health boards. This will, by extension, allow for utilisation by individual health and social care partnerships.

Concurrently, we are engaging with local health and social care partnerships across Scotland about why it is so important for them to increase capacity for autism diagnostic services and for them to redesign services which are sustainable.

**Allocate investment for autism support teams in every local authority or health and social care partnership in Scotland**

Following the publication of the Scottish Strategy for Autism in 2011, a national mapping exercise was undertaken and each local authority was provided with their own map of local services. Local authorities were asked to consider the strategy in each of their local areas and develop local strategies and action plans to support the needs of their local population.

£1.2 m of funding was provided to support this work. The strategy also commissioned research into the economic costs of autism - this report was published in March 2018 - *The microsegmentation of the autism spectrum: research project*. This report provides evidence of the economic costs of autism and makes recommendations for Health and Social Care Partnerships to consider when commissioning autism services.

The Scottish Government provides the policies, frameworks and resources to allow Integration Authorities, along with their partners, to deliver services that meet the needs of their local populations. When preparing their strategic commissioning plans, Integration Authorities are required to take into account the integration planning and delivery principles and the national health and wellbeing outcomes which are set out in the legislation that underpins integration. This approach is designed to ensure that outcomes are at the heart of planning for the local population's needs, and to embed a person centred approach alongside anticipatory and preventative care planning.

All Integration Authorities are expected to ensure that resources are spent in a way that improves the health and wellbeing of their community and delivers best value for taxpayers. Integration Authorities are also expected to work with colleagues more widely across the public sector to improve outcomes for local people. Integration Authorities are rightly required to continually assess their expenditure of public funds to ensure the delivery of best value and make the most effective use of funding for the benefit of patients, other service users and their families.

- There are 31 integration authorities in Scotland who are now responsible for over £9 billion of funding for local services.
- This year, we are delivering £811 million of additional direct investment in social care and integration. This is an increase of 14% - up from £711 million in 2019 20.
- These authorities are required to work with their local communities and providers of care to ensure care is responsive to people's needs.
- The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring our health and social care services get the support they need during these unprecedented times. We are working closely with COSLA, Integration Authorities, Local Authorities and Health Boards to provide the necessary funding across the sector in recognition of costs incurred to date and to support the remobilisation of services, ensuring that safety remains the top priority at all times.
- The Adult Social Care Winter Preparedness Plan includes additional investment of £112 million to further support the social care sector, this is on top of £150 million already announced, bringing the total to £262 million.

I hope this information is helpful.