

PE1548/W

Petitioner Email of 29 February 2016

I have received a draft of the guidelines from the Scottish Government within the last few days and I have asked BILD (The British Institute of Learning Disabilities) CALM training and The Challenging Behaviour Foundation to look over them for their comments and input, I am awaiting their response at this time and will engage with the Scottish Government further as soon as I have this.

The aim of my petition was very clear, and I also feel that the petitions committee have been very clear in their correspondence with The Scottish Government that we represent the most severely disabled children and young people in Scotland. Many of our children are completely non-verbal, have complex neurological disorders and/or medical needs. This specific group of children are not looked after children, nor do they have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. These children are arguably the **most** vulnerable children in Scotland and we have to make sure that they get **additional** protection in our schools and this protection is robust enough to make sure they are safe in school.

I am also struggling to understand why the new guidelines are being written as part of Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions' (IEI2). Our petition was about the use of restraint and **seclusion** not exclusion. For clarity, "seclusion" in schools is used to isolate a child within the school. We know of many small, disabled children who are having sensory meltdowns (not tantrums or wilful behaviour) who are being physically restrained by staff (causing injuries like abrasions and bruises) then they are carried or dragged along corridors to these seclusion rooms (often called cool down/reflection/blue rooms but are actually little more than small, empty cupboard-like spaces) where they are left there, alone, upset and locked in until the teacher/staff member decides to let them out! We know of many small disabled children who are spending hours upon hours for days and weeks in barbaric conditions like this. This is **seclusion**, not exclusion where a child is sent home to their parents for wilful mis-behaviour.

I am delighted however that the special education schools inspection process will be changed, and I am also pleased that our idea for a communication passport for children meets with the Government's approval and is now going to be available on GLOW. This is a great achievement.

I would like to specifically request that the petitions committee asks Scotland's Children's Commissioner Tam Baillie to have a look at these new guidelines for his comments. Tam Baillie was good enough to offer his advice and assistance in his

response to the petition last year, but I don't see any evidence that this has actually been taken up by The Scottish Government.

I feel that there is still much more to be done to ensure that the most vulnerable children in Scotland are protected from harsh and punitive treatment due to communicative behaviour because of their medical conditions that they have no control over and although these guidelines are a start to a more positive future, we still have more to do to make sure we are Getting It Right For Every Child.

Kind regards

Beth Morrison
Petitioner PE 01548