



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01704

Name of petitioner

Duncan MacGillivray

Petition title

Improve targets and outcomes for autistic people in Scotland

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure that an agenda of real and meaningful change for autistic people is pursued by introducing the following targets and outcomes by 2021:

- That every person in Scotland going through an autism diagnostic procedure will be assessed within a calendar year and receive a statutory services assessment from a qualified social worker as an integral part of this process, within twelve months from the date of their initial referral.
- That children with autism in mainstream schools will have their assessed needs for classroom support met by an ASL assistant with a recognised autism qualification as part of a mandatory registration process for ASL professionals.
- That young adults with autism will have a statutory right to specialist support from their local authority up to the age of 25.
- That an Autism Act will be in place within the next 5 years to enshrine specific rights and services for autistic people in our legal system.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I have raised these issues with my MSPs, including Michael Russell, Donald Cameron and John Finnie and with MSP's with previous ministerial responsibilities, Jamie Hepburn and Shona Robison.

I have raised my concerns with civil servants/advisors to government.

I also had a petition last year hosted by change.org calling for similar actions. This petition amassed 2,014 signatures and approximately 200 comments of support.

I originally intended for this petition to be considered by the Committee much earlier in 2018, but unfortunately it was not processed in time by the Petitions Department.

Petition background information

Many people living with autism in Scotland have been disappointed and let down by the Scottish Government's 10-year Autism Strategy launched in 2011. We have had lots of talk, conferences and words on paper but no action or material changes.

So many of us had high hopes for improvements for our loved ones but these improvements have never materialised. For the Scottish Government to claim they have accomplished much for autistic people and their families is simply untrue.

Scottish Autism Strategy Outcomes and Priorities 2018-2021

The Scottish Autism Strategy Outcomes and Priorities 2018 -2021 document (<https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00533392.pdf>) published in March 2018, sets out priorities for action for the final phase of the 10 year Autism Strategy through to 2021. To inform this document, the Scottish Government undertook a series of engagement events including a consultation.

However, I believe that this document has failed once again to commit to real, meaningful and measurable improvement for autistic people in Scotland and that they have been subjected to yet more vague and largely meaningless rhetoric.

It is now imperative that clear, meaningful and quantifiable improvements for autistic people in Scotland are identified for this time period.

E.g. In response to the current crisis in autism diagnostic services in Scotland where there are inconsistencies and widespread unacceptable delays and waiting times, the Outcomes and Priorities document states under Strategic Outcome One: A Healthy Life:

"Autistic people enjoy the highest attainable standard of living, health and family life and have timely access to diagnostic assessment and integrated support services"

In terms of what the Scottish Government says it will do next, it commits to:

"...continue to facilitate improvement for autism assessment and diagnosis for all age groups and genders through Improvement Programmes and the Autism Knowledge Hub."

This is both unacceptably vague and unmeasurable.

I want the vague goals/outcomes of the current Autism Strategy to be supplemented with meaningful and measurable targets that will guarantee real change for autistic people and their families over the next 3 years and to create a real legacy of improvements in service provision for autistic people in Scotland.

Unique web address

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01704>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

13 / 09 / 2018

Comments to stimulate online discussion

Future consultations must facilitate the wider involvement of those affected by autism in Scotland and not be based solely on the views of chosen groups.

More thought must be given as to how to ensure parents and unpaid carers living with autism are supported to be heard.