

PE1682/A

AbbVie Ltd submission of 8 June 2018

Further to the Committee's consideration of Petition PE01682 (24 May 2018) from James Jamieson calling for the establishment of a specialist centre for patients with Hidradenitis Suppurativa (HS) in Scotland, I am writing to provide you with some additional information which I hope will be of interest in advance of your engagement with the Scottish Government.

AbbVie is a global biopharmaceutical company which has a considerable history in the development of treatments for patients with dermatological conditions including HS. We are working in Scotland to improve patients' access to treatment and we therefore welcome the Committee's consideration of this petition.

Raising awareness within the medical profession

The NHS has developed a digital dermatology resource which is available as a website and an app (www.dermatology.nhs.scot), primarily targeted for use by general practitioners, to help them identify and diagnose dermatological conditions and to provide information on referral pathways for specific conditions and options for treatment. The inclusion of HS would be a useful first step in helping to raise awareness of the condition amongst general practitioners and inform them of the treatment options available as well as supporting improved referral into specialist dermatology services.

We have approached the project group at Scottish Government to pursue the inclusion of HS in this online resource, and while there is general support for this, there are no timelines for when this work will be taken forward.

The Committee may wish to raise this with the Scottish Government as part of its follow-up activities.

Provision of specialist services for patients with HS

Although no national specialist centre for HS patients exists in Scotland, Forth Valley NHS Board has recently established a service for patients in their region. This service will provide patients with access to specialist clinical support and this work is being led by Dr Fiona Craig, a consultant dermatologist and Dr Fiona Collier, a GP with Special Interest.

Improving referral pathways

Patients report that they can often wait years to be diagnosed with HS and it can be a long wait for them to receive specialist dermatological care. Whilst educating healthcare professionals about this condition, which it is estimated affects 1% of the population, it is important that referral pathways ensure that those patients who are

diagnosed with HS can access specialist services. The development of a SIGN guideline for use by healthcare professionals would be an effective way to ensure that patients can access the right care and treatment. There has been a considerable amount of work on pathways in England, for example the NORSE clinic in the Midlands, which the Committee may wish to explore as they consider this petition further.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss any of the above in greater detail, if the Committee would find this helpful.