

PE1952/J: Specialist services for patients with autonomic dysfunction

Minister for Public Health and Women's Health written submission, 16 January 2025

Thank you for the Committee's correspondence to the Scottish Government of 16 December 2024 regarding petition PE1952: '*Specialist services for patients with autonomic dysfunction*', and the opportunity to respond to the Committee's queries following its meeting of 11 December 2024.

The Committee states that it is keen to understand what information and monitoring is in place regarding standards of care for people affected by dysautonomia, including information on the number of clinicians who are currently treating or willing to accept patients with PoTS. It may be helpful for the Committee to note that the Scottish Government provides core funding and is responsible for setting the strategic policy for the NHS in Scotland, however, responsibility for the delivery of care rests locally with NHS Boards who configure services taking into account local circumstances and the reasonable needs of their patient populations.

The Committee will therefore appreciate that the Scottish Government does not hold information on the number of clinicians employed by NHS Scotland who are providing, or are willing to provide, care for people affected by PoTS. If you have not already done so, you may wish to contact territorial NHS Boards, which would be best placed to provide the information you have requested.

We do, however, expect NHS Boards to provide high quality, person-centred care and support for everyone, including people with dysautonomia.

As we have previously stated to the Committee, we understand that a majority of individuals with autonomic symptoms experience them as part of other conditions, such as Parkinson's Disease and related movement disorders, neuropathies and Multiple Sclerosis. Autonomic disorders are part of the neurology specialty training curriculum and it is within the remit of neurologists to diagnose and manage these symptoms as part of their routine practice in the majority of cases.

The Committee has also asked what steps the Scottish Government will take to improve understanding of autonomic dysfunction amongst GPs. We recognise the importance of clinician awareness and can confirm that NHS Education for Scotland's learning platform 'Turas' contains training resources on autonomic nervous system dysfunction. These resources are accessible to a multidisciplinary audience, including GPs and are highlighted below.

- 14 June 2022 – PoTs UK webinar '[Long Covid and the autonomic nervous system - a top - down and bottom - up approach](#)'.

- 17 July 2023 – NHS Education for Scotland slide pack learning bite '[The autonomic nervous system and long COVID](#)'.

Additionally, through our [Neurological Care & Support Framework](#) we have funded Action for ME and partners to disseminate an online learning module on ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome for GPs and health professionals in Scotland, which incorporates information on PoTS within the context of ME/CFS.

I hope this provides the committee with the information it requires.

Yours sincerely

Jenni Minto MSP