

Petitioner submission of 27 April 2023

PE2008/B: Provide funding for a separate mental health A&E for children

Firstly, can I take this opportunity to thank the Scottish Government for their submission and for their consideration of our petition. I am petitioning with a member of my family and write this response on our behalf.

Please note on reading the submission we have a few points that we wish to highlight:

- Firstly, we put this petition forward due to our own experience of the impracticalities of a child who is in crisis having to present to A&E, as most will be aware our A&E departments are overwhelmed and crowded, this can be extremely distressing to a child who is in crisis with their Mental Health, a young member of my family was made to sit in a busy waiting area after he had taken an overdose of medication and was hearing voices in his head whilst also dealing with the noise of a busy department. This is why a designated Mental Health A&E would reduce any added distress to already distressed children.
- Second point we wish to highlight is within the submission the Scottish Government have mentioned services and beds for Mental Health however the number of these beds available for Adults and Children has not been mentioned can this be clarified as our research has shown for the West of Scotland there are only 2 wards for those in crisis with their mental health.
- Third point we wish to highlight is within the submission it was mentioned about NHS 24 and the mental health hubs that are within this service, we wish to highlight that the biggest part of any mental health assessment is observation, for example speaking to a child or the parent on the phone to assess their current state is not effective as how can the professional see any subtle signs of distress over a phone such as rapid eye movement when the

patient is hearing voices or skin picking and pinching due to stress or anxiety, therefore can the rationale behind this be explained.

- The fourth point within the submission, we wish to highlight is the mention of the RUC programme research has shown that this programme does not have sufficient number of CAHMS staff available and that in most areas people are waiting up to 900 days to be seen by CAHMS services, therefore how can this programme be recommended within the submission?
- Our fifth point we wish to highlight in the submission is the mention of available hubs within the Out of hours services for Children and Adolescents however there is no information on the locations of these hubs and centres that are available to children and adolescents struggling or in crisis with their mental health, can the exact locations please be made public?
- The sixth point and very important point we wish to highlight from the submission is the mention of the “Every life matters” report 2020 these targets are the same as the ones from the report issued in 2018, could it be confirmed if the targets within the 2018 report were met and if this is why they have been used within the 2020 report?
- The seventh point we wish to highlight from the submission is the mention that pilot schemes are running in Dundee and the Highlands for 16 year olds and also schemes being piloted for 12 year old plus, CAHMS is a service for all children and my family member is 11 and was only 10 when he attempted suicide for the first time and could not utilise these services, can it be confirmed why the piloted services are not available to any child of any age who meet the criteria and who are struggling with their mental health as a children’s service should be available to all?
- Our final point we wish to highlight from the submission is the mention and discussion of GIRFEC, the policies and services currently available are not getting it right for any child, our family member is a prime example he was not given access to a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist until his third attempt at suicide

and also the current service is not getting it right for the hundreds of children who are awaiting assessment by CAHMS who have been waiting far beyond the recommended government time scale, therefore can the Scottish Government please advise how GIRFEC has been met in their opinion?

We wish to thank the Scottish Government for taking the time in reading our concerns, we wish to add that the current highlighted concerns not only had a detrimental effect on our family member but also on the family, both the Children and Adult mental health services are stretched and the lack of available support has caused us to have to be commenced on medication for our mental health, this is due to the fact we are having to watch him and safe guard him 24 hours a day with no continued support. If we cannot get mental health services right for our children, then this will cause added pressure to the adult services as those caring for these children become exhausted and mentally traumatised themselves. We have to get it right for all children and adults.