

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition PE2141: ‘Support the neurodiverse community by providing funding for psychoeducation’, lodged by Luis Robertson

Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

[PE2141](#) calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to improve the support available to the neurodiverse community by providing fully-funded psychoeducation and sensory aids, which allow for greater community integration pre- and post-diagnosis.

Neurodiversity in Scotland

[Neurodiverse groups include](#) people with autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), intellectual disabilities, and learning differences such as dyslexia. [It is estimated that 15-20% of Scotland's population is neurodiverse.](#)

What is psychoeducation?

[Psychoeducation provides service users and their family, carers or friends](#) with the information they need to understand their condition, and empower them to manage any challenges they face. [Psychoeducation interventions](#) are typically structured, fixed-term, condition-specific sessions, delivered by a qualified professional. The sessions offer information, education, and simple therapeutic work.

In the context of neurodiversity, psychoeducation can help people diagnosed with conditions such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) to understand their diagnosis and find effective self-management strategies. Psychoeducation can also help parents and other family, carers and friends of neurodiverse people to access information about their condition. Psychoeducation is an emergent field, and the evidence base is therefore relatively small. However, [research conducted to date suggests that psychoeducation can play a positive role](#) in supporting neurodiverse groups post-diagnosis, particularly [if the resources shared are co-produced by neurodiverse people.](#)

Where psychoeducation is available, it is commonly delivered as part of the post-diagnostic support offered to people diagnosed with particular conditions. Consequently, long waiting times for assessment for autism, ADHD, and other

neurodevelopmental conditions may affect patients' ability to access psychoeducation resources.

Current provision of psychoeducation and sensory aids in Scotland

There are some psychoeducation resources available to neurodiverse people and their family, carers and friends in Scotland, though not necessarily in the form of a structured intervention. For example, [NHS Lothian's website lists a number of psychoeducation resources](#) related to autism. [The Edinburgh Psychoeducation Intervention for Children and Young People \(EPIC\) research programme](#) has produced a series of psychoeducation resources for neurodiverse children and their families.

[The use of sensory aids can vary greatly](#) depending on an individual neurodiverse person's needs. They may include fidget toys, weighted blankets, therapy balls, visual timers, and a number of other options. Though healthcare practitioners may suggest appropriate sensory aids and suppliers, these aids do not currently appear to be routinely provided by NHS Boards.

Scottish Government actions

In 2020, [the Scottish Government funded a pilot national post-diagnostic support programme for people diagnosed with autism](#). The programme included the provision of information and training for autistic people and their families. Originally scheduled for six months, the pilot ran from December 2020 to March 2023. An [evaluation of the pilot programme](#) recommended the development of consistent post-diagnostic support for autistic people and their loved ones.

Scottish Parliament actions

There has been no Parliamentary action on this topic prior to consideration of this petition.

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Researcher

12 March 2025

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

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