

# **PE2156/A: Improve access to ADHD diagnosis and treatment across Scotland**

## **Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport written submission, 12 May 2025**

### **1. Does the Scottish Government consider the specific ask[s] of the petition to be practical or achievable? If not, please explain why.**

Some of the asks are achievable within current Scottish Government action plans. Funding is provided to health boards and universal services (such as educational services), but it is not specific to ADHD. The Scottish Government expects local services to provide support to people with ADHD within this funding envelope. It is worth noting that the Scottish Government's approach focuses on wider neurodivergent conditions, which includes ADHD.

- **standardise diagnostic pathways for equitable access across Scotland**

We are working to implement Adult Neurodevelopmental Pathways to increase access to pre and post diagnosis support and tools and standardise diagnostic pathways. The public consultation on the proposed Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill included discussion on statutory strategies, including national ones, on learning disabilities and neurodivergence, which if implemented would include ADHD.

Additionally, the Scottish Government's National Neurodevelopmental Specification for Children and Young People aims to ensure that children and families receive the support and access to services that meet their needs at the earliest opportunity, based on the GIRFEC approach. It sets out seven standards for services to support children and young people who have neurodevelopmental profiles with support needs and require more support than currently available.

### **2. What, if any, action the Scottish Government is currently taking to address the issues raised by this petition, and is any further action being considered that will achieve the ask[s] of this petition?**

- **fund services to reduce waiting times and improve capacity**

This year, we are providing funding of £123.5 million to NHS Boards to support improvements across mental health services, including neurodevelopmental services. The Scottish Government expects each Board to have arrangements in place to ensure people waiting for an ADHD assessment are signposted to appropriate supports, and for Boards and children's services partners to work together to implement the National ND Specification.

We also provided a further almost £250,000 in 2024/25 to fund a range of individual projects aimed at improving neurodevelopmental assessment and support for children and young people.

Scottish Government officials are engaging with the Royal College of GPs (Scotland) to understand more about what could be done to support GPs to enter into voluntary or shared care agreements. In response to a letter from officials in March, the Royal College has made a number of suggestions. Officials are currently considering these proposals.

- **provide post-diagnostic support, including therapy and medication**

The Scottish Government's £1 million per annum Autistic Adult Support Fund funds organisations that provide pre- and post-diagnostic support to adults with ADHD, especially where this co-occurs with autism. The current fund is due to run until October 2028.

- **standardise diagnostic pathways for equitable access across Scotland**

The Scottish Government has commissioned the National Autism Implementation Team (NAIT) to work with Health Boards to build a neurodevelopmentally informed workforce in Scotland. NAIT also listen to and work in partnership with neurodivergent people.

NAIT host an Adult Neurodevelopmental Pathway Professional Network to support clinical teams and have hosted a national 'learning from pathfinders event'. These forums highlight developments and innovation in relation to working towards stepped care pathways to meet the needs of autistic adults and those with ADHD, building on learning from 4 pathfinder sites funded by the Scottish Government and supported by NAIT.

NAIT also deliver professional learning and learning conversations through webinars, workshops, in-person training sessions, developing written resources, guidance and key messages.

- **develop a national ADHD strategy to address the societal and individual impact of untreated ADHD.**

The Scottish Government does not currently have any plans to develop and implement a specific national ADHD strategy.

However, we are currently continuing the development of proposals for a Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence (LDAN) Bill. We understand that ADHD is a form of neurodivergence. The Bill will aim to ensure that the rights of LDAN groups are better respected, protected and championed. One of the proposals consulted on is a national statutory LDAN strategy, supported by local statutory LDAN strategies and statutory guidance.

The next step for the Bill is to publish draft Bill provisions. These provisions will take into account insights and views gathered through the consultation process and a second phase of development with the three Bill Advisory Panels (including lived experience representation), which is currently underway.