

PE1704/F

North Ayrshire Council submission of 30 October 2018

North Ayrshire Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Public Petitions Committee regarding Petition PE 1704, "*Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure that an agenda of real and meaningful change for autistic people is pursued by introducing the following targets and outcomes by 2021.*"

- *That every person in Scotland going through an autism diagnostic procedure will be assessed within a calendar year and receive a statutory services assessment from a qualified social worker as an integral part of this process, within twelve months from the date of their initial referral.*
- *That children with autism in mainstream schools will have their assessed needs for classroom support met by an ASL assistant with a recognised autism qualification as part of a mandatory registration process for ASL professionals.*
- *That young adults with autism will have a statutory right to specialist support from their local authority up to the age of 25.*
- *That an Autism Act will be in place within the next 5 years to enshrine specific rights and services for autistic people in our legal system.'*

Children in North Ayrshire with Autism do have their needs assessed through our staged intervention and Child's Plan process. This process acknowledges their autism and identifies the effect it has on their lives. A number of specific targets based on wellbeing are set in response to the child's individual needs and support is allocated from a core budget to support them.

This support is not met necessarily with the deployment of an Additional Support Needs assistant with a recognised Autism qualification. However a programme of Autism tiered training within a framework has been designed and made available to build capacity in our teachers and classroom assistants to support Autism.

Our Autism strategy provides Autism training for mainstream practitioners; for our primary and secondary Autism educational support resource bases and for our Additional Support Needs school staff. With children of pre-school age, our home visiting team and early years language resource liaise with families and Early Years Centres to provide support and advice to meeting their autism needs. All training is designed; annually updated and delivered by Educational Psychologists in partnership with parents of children with Autism, individuals with Autism, and with specialist establishment staff.

The Council/HSCP hopes the above information is of assistance to the Committee.

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In the context of adult services, North Ayrshire is an active partner in the delivery of a broad ranging pan-Ayrshire Autism strategy aimed at encouraging appropriate access to services for people with autism, including delivery of training at very various levels to complement relevant expertise where it already exists, and exploring means of addressing recognised issues in relation to assessment and diagnosis. Crucially this work will also be paying attention to access to services prior to diagnosis. From a North Ayrshire perspective, all of this work is occurring in the context of an ongoing commitment to ensure that people, whatever their needs, can get access to appropriate supports within their community and from statutory services where appropriate. We recognise that all individuals and the communities they live in have assets, and in many circumstances it is the support and development of these assets that will lead to better outcomes, and a more inclusive society.

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