

## **PE1704/K**

Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association's submission of 31 October 2018

The Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association is Scotland's only specialist union for Secondary Teachers. The union was set up to ensure that the secondary education view is properly represented. The SSTA has approximately 7,000 members across all positions, including headteachers, in secondary schools.

The SSTA strongly supports the second point (relevant to educational provision) of the petition. They also recognise that appropriate diagnosis and the availability of supporting services (point 1 of the petition) for children and young people with autism is essential to their educational progress throughout their school years.

The committee also asked for the SSTA's views on training and support for educationalists (teachers and auxiliary staff) in the area of autism. Currently, there is no statutory requirement for teachers or PSAs to have any specialist training in this 'additional support need' area.

Many teachers feel underqualified and trained to support the children and young people in their care. They would welcome any training made available to them both in mainstream and in specialist settings.

SSTA advocates that maximum class sizes should be reduced by 2 pupils for every pupil in the class with autism. A bigger reduction would be necessary to allow appropriate classroom management when more than one pupil with autism in a class.

Teachers also recognise the invaluable support auxiliary staff gives children and young people with autism. This often makes the difference between a child or young person with autism managing mainstream education or not.

Our evidence for this is not anecdotal. SSTA members through motions at national Council and Congress have given the SSTA Executive the mandate to demand, of Scottish Government thorough legislation and local authorities through resourcing, adequate levels of staffing and appropriate training for teachers and auxiliary staff in order to best support children and young people with additional support needs including those with autism.