

**PE1548/KK**

Petitioner submission of 8 September 2017

As you know, the Scottish Government published Involved, Included and Engaged Part 2, A positive approach to managing School exclusions in June 2017.

I welcome the guidance which includes a section on Physical Intervention. This is a good start, but I feel there is more to do to ensure the protection of Scotland's most vulnerable children.

When I came to the Scottish Parliament back in March 2015, I spoke about a document called "Holding Safely" It is an excellent document, but it was never written with children who have disabilities in mind. It was written for "looked after children". It also applies to children in secure units and young offender's institutions.

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0041/00413007.pdf>

After consulting with my colleagues, we feel that Holding Safely may have been better placed to be updated to include specific guidance for children with additional needs and severe learning disabilities who exhibit behavioural distress. I believe that Dr Brodie Paterson (CALM Training), Ben Higgins (CEO British Institute of Learning Disabilities- BILD) and Jenny McMillan (PAMIS) have all written to the committee to give their support for this suggestion.

As time goes on, we realise that the use of restraint and seclusion is not just a problem in Education. We are also hearing about the use of restraint in after school clubs, and extra-curricular groups run privately so we must make sure we include them too.

Therefore, I wanted to let you know that I have been in touch with Professor Jennifer Davidson, Executive Director at The Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures (University of Strathclyde). Professor Davidson led the team who wrote the 2005 document "Holding Safely". It was last updated in 2013.

Professor Davidson has said that she would be would be happy to discuss an update with her team, however, we need The Scottish Government to agree that the update can be done.

Children with disabilities should not be treated as lesser human beings because of their neurological conditions. Surely, they are entitled to the same protection as children in residential care and places like secure units and young offenders institutions?

I have been told time and time again that children with disabilities have extra protection from cruel and inhumane treatment, yet there is little evidence of this in the real world.

Scottish Schools have been back for just over 3 weeks, in that time, I have been inundated with complaints from families whose children have returned to school under the new guidance yet there is no change in the way their children are being

treated. Whilst I understand that staff will need time to read and implement, the new guidance, this will only apply in school and it's not statutory.

We are still hearing about problems in after school clubs and even extra-curricular clubs for children especially with conditions like Autism and ADHD.

Meanwhile, I can confirm that Kate Sanger and I met with the Scottish Government's 32 Key Stakeholders on the Additional Support for Learning Group on 23rd August to present the communication passport and talk about Positive Behaviour Support. We think that the meeting was very positive and are awaiting feedback.

In conclusion, I would like the petitions committee to ask The Scottish Government to consider an update to Holding Safely to include guidance for children with learning disabilities. I would also like to ask the Scottish Government for their feedback on the meeting that Kate and I had with The 32 key stakeholders on 23<sup>rd</sup> August.

Thank you once again for your continued support.