

# National Specialist Services and Screening Division submission of 21 December 2022 PE1952/E: Specialist Services for patients with autonomic dysfunction

May I begin by thanking you for your recent correspondence regarding the petition for specialist services for patients with autonomic dysfunction and specifically the quantification as to the scale of the problem in Scotland.

The role of NHS National Services Scotland, National Services Division (NSD) includes commissioning of nationally designated specialist services in Scotland. NSD work closely with colleagues and providers in NHS England to ensure access to highly specialised healthcare for those Scottish residents who following assessment by a specialist clinician in Scotland require specific clinical expertise, investigation or interventions which are not available within Scotland. In many cases such expertise is concentrated within either a single or small number of centres due to either the small number of patients requiring this service (rare disease) or because there is a need to concentrate technical expertise within a clinical team to ensure that case volumes are adequate to provide assurance of clinical quality and safety (specialist surgical services).

The term autonomic dysfunction is associated with many different underlying conditions and such conditions are normally investigated and managed within either local secondary care services or regional tertiary units in Scotland. Depending on the needs of each patient, specialists such as cardiologists, diabetologists and neurologists will be involved with their care and investigations. These services are typically commissioned locally by the Health Board in which the patient resides.

Where specialist clinicians feel that a patient requires more specialist specific investigations or expertise unavailable in Scotland there is the option for the clinician to seek funding approval via their Health Board from NSD. This allows referral of the patient to a highly specialised service such as that provided by the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, Queens Square, London.

As most patients with an autonomic dysfunction are investigated and managed within Scotland, NSD does not hold information on the numbers of people affected by autonomic dysfunction nationally, or the resources required to support these patients. Similarly, with the broad range of local services and specialities involved for autonomic dysfunctions, we would not anticipate NSD to be invited to commission a national specialist service, training resources or development of a clinical pathway.