



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Glasgow Region

Sue Webber
Convener
Education, Children and Young People Committee
The Scottish Parliament
EH99 1SP

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Dear Convener

Further information on costings, etc, in relation to the Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill

There have been significant developments in terms of the Transitions Bill's costings, and in terms of the efforts I have made in recent months to engage with the Scottish Government to work together and I wanted to take this opportunity to update the committee again. I will set out in this letter what those developments are, and I hope you share the view that those developments only strengthen the case for my Bill. Lastly, I restate my determination to see significant progress on statutory obligations in transitions and improved accountability and remain open to doing that by whatever means necessary including through my bill, or indeed by mechanisms suggested by the government or others, to do so.

As I have said before, I know and welcome the fact that your Committee and the Scottish Government shares the view that something must be done to improve the transition experience of young disabled people. I have tried to engage the Scottish Government on transitions and have always tried to maintain a degree of flexibility over the form a solution will take. However, I stand by my position that there is a need for transitions plans and a strategy on a statutory footing, and accountability mechanisms for parliament and others, on these, and I hope the Committee will share that view.

Plan after plan has failed, and that is because there has been no clear statutory framework that has held the Government to account. That is also why I continue to believe there must be a Minister with special responsibility over transitions – accountability is essential to any national transitions strategy, that is what disabled people and their families, up and down the country, are telling us. We must listen.

The Government hopes to rely on tried, tested, and sadly to date, failed approaches to address transitions in Scotland. I do welcome efforts to improve the current situation, but I do not believe much progress will be made unless the framework my Bill proposes is

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implemented. A statutory solution is, in my view, the way forward, as it is the only solution that has not yet been explored.

The recent Programme for Government was an opportunity for the Scottish Government to make good on its assurances to your Committee, and to outline its plans for a national transitions strategy. But there was nothing. How are disabled people supposed to rely on the Government's assurances that it has a plan for a national transitions strategy, when the one opportunity it had to lay that plan out was not taken? I think to wait any longer without a statutory national transitions strategy would be a catastrophic failure on the Government's part, for young disabled people, and that is why my Bill commits the Government to publishing a strategy within a year of it receiving Royal Assent. This is the statement of intent on action that disabled young people, and their families, are waiting on.

The Scottish Government, itself, has currently relied on pilots to improve transitions, but the trend in those pilots have shown that, when push comes to shove, the priority of transitions is shoved into the rear-view mirror. It is clear: without statutory duties on transitions plans, it is difficult to ensure they remain a priority. At best they become lost in a sea of other plans or priorities, and at worst, they don't happen at all.

The Government is yet to publish its strategy on this, a strategy this government first set out in a manifesto in 2016. A statement of intent to scope a strategy, on a date as yet unknown, is the Government's best suggestion for now, but this still leaves disabled people in the lurch that bit longer.

I am happy to continue working with the Government to discuss how we can address these concerns, and give young disabled people a fighting chance at a future. I am happy to consider all options but as yet the Government has only really put forward more of the same, with more time to see if it will eventually work. This delivers neither the pace nor scale of action needed. My bill attempts to do that. I hope that they can see that and if they other suggestions, or indeed amendments to my bill they believe will do what's needed and that meets the scale and pace needed, I'm here to discuss them when and if they are prepared to do so.

My commitment is to the disabled children and young people, their families, and those that support them, to ensure they have a clear basis, in law, with accountability built in, that is reliable, encourages accountability and that will stand up for them as they pursue their dreams and aspirations.

Key changes in relation to the Bill's costings

As the Committee requested, I have worked with COSLA and ADES to update the costing associated with the Bill since the Financial Memorandum was originally submitted. While I understand that parliamentary process does not allow me to publish an updated Financial Memorandum at this stage, I wanted to set these out to the Committee to help with its deliberations.

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The costings associated with my bill have been updated to include the costs of guidance teachers and pastoral care support in undertaking transitions planning meetings; attrition; and the on costs (non-contact time etc.) associated with salaries.

I have amended the costs to reflect that an additional £110,000 of funding would be required from the Scottish Government to fund that.

Moreover, attrition has been considered in reassessing the costs of the Bill, and it is now attributable to a likely year-on-year decrease in school leavers that are seeking or receiving support.

In addition, I have increased the assumed pastoral care staff salary, with an hourly rate of £53.85, as well as an additional 30% on-costs calculation, as per COSLA's recommendation. This has increased the projections in the original Financial Memorandum by, around, £33 per hour.

I have also updated the expected costs of transitions plans on local authorities, which calculations now project are in the region of £3,446,400 per year for all local authorities, or £107,700 per year, per local authority. Attrition is also responsible for, after a year-on-year rise, and a 1,200 meetings per year.

The overall cost changes from the original Financial Memorandum are: £135,000 for preparing and implementing a national transitions strategy (up by £12,000), £102,000 for reviewing the national transitions strategy every three years (£30,833 per year) (up by £9,500), £200 for all publishing costs, and £1,217,280 cost for local authorities to implement and revise plans in year 1, which will rise to £6,086,400 by year 10. The total cost for schools and local authorities, by year 10, is now projected to be £12,979,200.

I hope the information I have provided in this letter is helpful to the Committee. I want to work with the Committee and the Government to make this work, it is imperative that we do that so that disabled people have the support they need.

I continue to appreciate the work your Committee is doing to consider my Bill, and I hope we can work together to see it becomes law, in the interests of disabled children and young people across Scotland.

Yours sincerely

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