

## **SUBMISSION FROM RAYMOND**

1. My name is Raymond. I have asperger's syndrome and am attending an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) specialist base, for part of my time in academy. I support the autism bill and believe that children and adults in Scotland should be entitled to the support and services that they require.
2. It is evident that I am not alone in this belief. The most recent surveys show that 95% of the Scottish population believe that there should be legislation forcing local councils and health boards to improve services for people with autism. Altogether it is estimated that over 200,000 people are affected by autism – directly or indirectly – every single day. Therefore it is clear that an autism bill would be highly beneficial to a significant demographic of Scotland.
3. These beliefs are not unfounded. Almost a quarter of people have had to go to a council outside their local authority and a third had to go to a tribunal – just to get the required services. 42% of the population agree that care professionals' comprehension and knowledge of autism and helping autistic people is poor or very poor.
4. There is also a clear lack of understanding of autism in the general public. Almost half of the Scottish population is not even aware that it is a lifelong condition! This ignorance leads to people with autism often getting gravely misunderstood; only serving to make their difficult lives even harder.
5. One root of this problem is the difficulty in even obtaining a diagnosis in the first place, as I found out while at a meeting with parents who are having problems in helping their autistic children. This may be partly because of the fact that psychiatrists feel that there are no services for autistic people to help them, and so they do not give a diagnosis since to them it would be a pointless endeavour.
6. With all of this in mind, it is bizarre that local authorities have not taken any action to improve their services. From the submissions from multiple local authorities and education authorities I have read it is clear that they feel that the available services are sufficient and that no more needs to be done. This is clearly the exact opposite of the opinion of almost everybody who is affected by autism – directly or indirectly - myself included!
7. An autism bill would force local authorities into providing the necessary services for those affected by autism. This would drastically improve the lives of this significant demographic of Scotland's population. From personal experience I can vouch that my academy's specialist base has radically improved my life and has enabled me to cope with my life – and thus also making my parents' life much easier. With an improvement in services, psychiatrists would also feel more compelled to give a diagnosis as they would now feel that giving a diagnosis would be significant.

8. A potential major concern would be the cost of the implications of such legislation. However, this is nothing to worry about. It is estimated that the money saved would equal or outweigh the money required in investing in these services over time, making them cost effective. For one thing, jobs would be opened in the sectors directly related to the services. The Autism (Scotland) Bill would also help people with autism reach their full potential and lead to even more employment and not relying on benefits. I, for one, want to go to university to study physics and become a physicist. Without the help of the specialist base I attend, this would not have been possible. I also have the social skills to be in a loving relationship with my girlfriend.
9. Overall, it appears that the introduction of an autism bill would be entirely beneficial. It would vastly improve the lives of all those affected by autism and would be overall cost effective in the long run.

Raymond  
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