

SUBMISSION FROM QUARRIERS

1. Thank you for giving Quarriers the opportunity to respond to this consultation. Quarriers is a Scottish charity providing practical care and support in the areas of adult disability, children and families, epilepsy and young adults. Through more than 120 services in Scotland and south west England, we challenge inequality of opportunity and choice, to bring about positive change in people's lives.
2. The Autism (Scotland) Bill and strategy would provide the required legislative framework to give the strategy statutory status, and ensure it is adequately resourced and legally enforceable.
3. We believe that a Scottish autism strategy, thus underpinned, would benefit people with autism in Scotland by—
 - Improve outcomes for people with autism especially those with asperger's syndrome;
 - Developing national consistency in areas such as diagnosis, support and service provision, this can currently vary considerably from one geographical area to another;
 - Ensuring continuity between children's and adults' services that would facilitate a smooth transition;
 - Developing specialist training which is nationally recognised, rather than the current ad hoc arrangements made by many organisations;
 - Developing a consistent specialist diagnostic methodology to raise standards of accuracy;
 - Raising awareness of the condition both in the general public and in specialist professional support services.
4. Within the Bill as introduced, we would ask for clarification on the following—
5. In Section 4 Interpretation, "**appropriate stakeholders**" are identified as—
 - (a) *organisations representing persons with autistic spectrum conditions,*
 - (b) *organisations representing professionals delivering support to persons with such conditions,*
 - (c) *organisations involved in research relating to services for persons with such conditions,*
 - (d) *local authorities, and*
 - (e) *NHS bodies.*
6. There would appear to be no recognition of service-providing voluntary organisations.
7. And the definition of "**relevant services**"—

in relation to an NHS body, means health services provided for the purposes of the health service continued under section 1(1) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978

in relation to a local authority, means services provided by a local authority for the assessment, care and support of persons with autism.

(2) In this Act references to the provision of services include references to arranging for the provision of services (and references to services provided are to be construed accordingly).

8. Again, this is unclear about the status of voluntary sector services which are not paid for in their entirety by the NHS or local authorities.

Quarriers

8 October 2010