

SUBMISSION FROM YASEMIN SECMEZSOY-URQUHART

1. I am the mum of two children with Aspergers syndrome, a form of autism. They are both teenagers now, 13 and 17 respectively. I am delighted that this Bill is coming before the Scottish Parliament and I really dream that changes will be made that make an impact on the lives of children and their carers. What I hope it won't be is just a paper exercise that looks good. Having children with autism affects a family to its very core. For a start, with little help or belief that there is anything wrong with your children, getting a diagnosis is a great struggle during a very stressful time. Once you do finally get a diagnosis, you find that there is very little support or respite. In our case, my husband and I had to give up our jobs, as we could get no one to care for our children when they were off school. So from the beginning, it means you are financially decimated and isolated.
2. My daughter, who is 17 now, has spent time in psychiatric care all because her diagnosis didn't come until she was 14 and by that time she had a depressive illness, something which is very common. If she had got the care she needed at first, then this would not have developed or become a daily battle for her. Both my children have the potential to be real contributors to society but there is a massive gap in providing for children with Aspergers. Not "bad" enough for "special schools" and not able to fully cope with mainstream, they have fallen in to the black hole of "children with difficulties who don't get support" in the education system. My husband and I nearly lost our house as we could not meet our mortgage payments and were on antidepressants and suicidal. Did we get support from social work! No we didn't. We were told that as we had both given up work to look after our children, and we didn't have an addiction, we would not merit any help.
3. We are both now studying to become nurses as our children are teenagers but with the financial situation getting worse, we may well have to give this up soon. Our children and us deserve this autism bill to safeguard our children's future.

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