

## **ANONYMOUS SUBMISSION**

1. As the parent of a 38 year old man who has autism and learning difficulties, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to outline my views. Long term provision for my son has been a constant concern for me.
2. Although my son was diagnosed at the age of six, there were no local autism services at that time. It is good to see an improvement in services for children now, but much remains to be done. It is important to have fair access to diagnostic services and support services no matter where in Scotland one lives. Geographically this will be a challenge, but a Scottish autism bill would I hope be very valuable in ensuring the improvement in services throughout the country.
3. In order to provide proper services it would be necessary for each region to carry out an audit to identify the numbers of adults and children with autism. When my son was diagnosed the condition was regarded as relatively rare and we found it difficult to access specialised support. I sympathise with those seeking help for children with autism but I also remain concerned that adult services could be lagging behind. There is much talk of transition to adult services but for that to be successful there must be suitable adult services in place. I had concerns at one stage that the fact that autism is, we understand, a life-long condition, was not being emphasised enough. If each region had accurate figures of children and adults with autism they could then plan suitable services with the necessary numbers of places available.
4. One hopes that people with autism and their parents and carers would be involved with the professionals who are tasked with designing services. My son cannot submit his own views regarding the Bill in writing but in the past in a small group of people with autism he has been able to talk about what changes he would like to see in his life. He now lives in a supported tenancy. This housing is for adults with various disabilities. The charitable organisation which runs this service arranged for autism training for their staff and this has made it much easier for my son's support team to understand him. It is an example of excellent local practice. My son feels more confident in discussing his problems with the support workers now. I am very impressed by the effort they are making. Over the years we have tried various types of residential placements but this one is by far the best. I realised that while my son is happy in his current accommodation it would not suit all adults with autism. Some do need accommodation which has been specifically designed for people with autism. This has been provided already in some parts of the UK. In some areas, however, there is still a lack of suitable housing. With a Scottish strategy for autism we would hope to see a more equal distribution of services.
5. Assessment of needs is very important as not every person with autism will require the same level of support. Early provision of suitable services can make a significant difference to a child's life but there are other periods when needs may

change and therefore ongoing assessment is required. Transition to adult services is one example.

6. I hope that autism training will be available to all organisations which require it. An autism strategy could ensure that there is a fair and equal distribution of services throughout Scotland. Further to this it would be very helpful to have autism leadership at a local level. This would ensure that any local differences could be looked at and addressed as quickly as possible.

Anonymous  
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