

SUBMISSION FROM ALISON REID

1. I fully support an autism Bill as I have found through my own experience that services are severely lacking for people diagnosed with autism.
2. My son was diagnosed at eight years old after many years of trying to get him diagnosed by someone or somewhere. There needs to be a centre or centres that are accessible to all and spread throughout Scotland and not just Edinburgh or Glasgow. We live in the north east of Scotland, which is over 200 miles from these places.
3. One of the hardest parts are education. Local councils and staff have no specific meaningful training on teaching and supporting children with autism or on the autistic spectrum. Some staff seem to think that if they read a couple of books about the subject that they know all about it, or if a child veers from the description given in the book, staff cannot deal with this. In our experience my sons diagnosis was questioned by staff and auxiliaries that were supposed to help him. Behaviour that he sometimes displayed didn't conform with what they had been taught/read and they then labelled and treated him as a bad boy. Physical methods of handling children are also in question as when they can have a meltdown staff are not trained in what to do and how to handle them and the situation. My son suffered physical hurt at this school and also suffered discrimination as staff were refusing to work with him and also incidents were talked about and spread through the school. We had to find another school for him which he has settled into well.
4. Schools that are able to cope very well with these children should be held by local government and parents views should be able to be put on them so that they can give prospective other parents a truthful account of the schools strengths and failings.
5. A professional body should have an identification system and records of all the adult and children sufferers in their region and for the whole of Scotland.
6. Health agencies, education and social work should have clear guidance about what their area can offer sufferers and their family. This could be help with benefits, school support, groups for support for the family, the newest education tools and respite availability.
7. Respite should be available to the parents of children and adults on the autistic spectrum. Unfortunately in our area which is Moray, there are no respite facilities for us. We would benefit and so would he with even a night every four to six weeks. There is a respite facility in Moray [Elgin] but they cannot take him as he is physically able and can have a bit of a conversation. Their respite is for physically and mentally disabled and my

son does not fall into their category. I am not the only parent in Moray with a child on the spectrum, so why can this facility not even offer one night every six weeks for four to six children on the spectrum?

8. There should be more educating of members of the public and school pupils with newspaper articles, teacher taught sessions, radio slots and television adverts and programmes to let people know that our children are not badly behaved, it is that they have autism and are struggling in the world.
9. I fear for the future of my child as without the help and support when he is growing up that he will not be able to cope with the world and will end up in trouble or in a residential unit for adults which I do not want.
10. There needs to be rules set for education authorities to abide by when having autistic pupil/s in their school. There are schools who are law breaking in their treatment of pupils. They need to be accountable.
11. We all want the best for our children, whether they have a disability or not. We need to put in place strategies, support and knowledge that will help the autistic individual, whether a child or adult and also their family. Education, local councils and health authorities need to really source things or if not available in the area - start them up! Some authorities do want to help but others think it is too much bother in an already cash strapped budget.

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