

SUBMISSION FROM HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS AUTISM SOCIETY

1. Our Society fully supports the need for a Scottish autism bill and autism strategy. We are a support group for families affected by autism spectrum conditions and therefore hear lots of stories of inequitable service provision locally. We are also aware of high quality autism specific services in other areas especially for adults with the condition, which we lack locally.
2. We agree completely with the six key areas already identified and would very much like to see discussions around these areas have an impact in local service provision.
3. In the current economic climate, where cuts are inevitable, we need a Bill and a strategy which is robust enough to secure services for our families. We also need to end the inequality of services which families face constantly. There needs to be a clear strategy to ensure proper diagnosis, assessment, support and planning of services for children and adults with autism and their families. Training needs to be good quality and targeted at the services' needs. If needs are identified then they must be met. There needs to be a duty put on the local authority to meet the needs of people with autism and not just guidance.
4. A proper legislative framework is essential if people with autism and their families are to have access to essential services which are appropriate to their needs. We need to end the culture of those who shout the loudest getting services and those who don't have the energy or ability to fight, are left to struggle on with a second rate service or none at all.

Highlands and Islands Autism Society
8 October 2010