

SUBMISSION FROM J HOWISON

1. I welcome the willingness to ensure that proper service provision is made for people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) across Scotland. However, the "provision of relevant services" referred to in section 2(5) does seem to be a vague concept. While I recognise that there is a broad range of help required for people with ASD, they do need further description and there has to be some governance requirements. The explanatory notes are clear about the financial implications of this strategy - both the costs and the potential savings: the government needs to know that the money is being spent most effectively.
2. In ASD more than in any other area I know, there is a plethora of therapies and provision, many of which are extremely expensive and most of which do not have a clear evidence base to support them. There has been a cursory look at the psychological therapies for ASD in the Psychological Therapies Matrix for Children and Young People. Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) guidelines are not any more explicit.
3. If an autism strategy is to be implemented, there needs to be more consideration of—
 - outcomes, both long-term and short-term for people with ASD and their families,
 - what is or is not a "relevant service"
 - how services are monitored
 - the establishment of residential provision (i.e. if people with ASD require a range of services, residential units need to be able to provide all of these on site or be situated where these other services can be accessed)

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