

The National Autistic Society Cymru
Pembrokeshire Branch
C/O 6&7 Village Way
Greenmeadow Springs Business Park
Cardiff
CF15 7NE
18 March 2014

William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Dear William Powell

The Pembrokeshire branch of the National Autistic Society Cymru [NAS Cymru] welcomes the letter from the Deputy Minister for Social Services detailing the responses to her request for health boards to supply the waiting times for autistic spectrum disorder [ASD] diagnosis in children and their compliance with NICE guidelines.


From the summary of responses given, it confirms that the waiting times for a diagnosis of autism in children is longer in Hywel Dda UHB than in five of the seven local health boards in Wales. The figures also show that while diagnosis for children in some health boards is relatively swift, this is not the case in all health boards. It also demonstrates that none of the health boards are complying with the NICE guidelines on recognition, referral and diagnosis of children and young people on the autism spectrum

We are disappointed that Abertawe Bro Morgannwg and Cardiff and the Vale UHB have not yet provided the information requested by the Deputy Minister. We agree that it is important that there is transparent information across health boards and are pleased that the Deputy Minister will update the Committee when the information is received.

We note the Deputy Minister's acknowledgement that health boards recognise that more needs to be done to reduce waiting times and that this is a high priority. We also welcome the fact that Hywel Dda now has an improvement plan, which is having a material effect on the waiting times for diagnosis in children in Pembrokeshire.

We thank the Deputy Minister for the way she has responded to our petition and for sharing our views on the importance of a timely diagnosis for autism in children. We are also grateful to the Deputy Minister for the information on adult diagnosis and the achievements of the all Wales Adult Network.

We look forward to responding to the consultation on the refreshed ASD strategic action plan in due course and acknowledge that the Welsh Government was the first among the UK's nations to implement an action plan for autism.



Accept difference. Not indifference.
Gwahaniaeth. Nid difaterwch.

We would however ask that the Committee:

- shares the full summary of responses with the Pembrokeshire NAS branch;
- monitors the situation to ensure that Abertawe Bro Morgannwg and Cardiff and the Vale Committee supply their waiting times for diagnosis of autism in children before the beginning of the National Assembly Wales' summer recess;
- receives an update from Hywel Dda on progress of its action plan by the end of June 2014; and
- highlights the importance of a timely diagnosis by recommending that the ASD National Coordinator reports on waiting times and compliance with NICE guidelines as part of their duties in the Welsh Government's refreshed Strategic Action Plan.

We look forward to hearing the Committee's response.

Kind regards

Lisa Phillips
NAS Pembrokeshire branch