



**PUBLIC PETITION NO.**

**PE01438**

### **Name of petitioner**

Lynsey Pattie

### **Petition title**

Improving services for people with mental illness

### **Petition summary**

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide improved mental health services for those people in hospital and that have been discharged after having a mental health problem, and to actively stop the stigma of mental ill-health to ensure that people with mental health problems do not feel ashamed of their feelings.

### **Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition**

I have emailed my councillors and MSPs about this issue. Each time I received a reply I was promised that they would bring my concerns up in Parliament whenever they would. So far this has not happened.

I have also campaigned through volunteering with a mental health charity. The charity I volunteer with is the Scottish Association for Mental Health (also called SAMH). This charity raises money to challenge the stigma of mental ill health. It also provides accurate information on mental health disorders in order to tackle stigma from people gaining the wrong information. They run campaigns such as "Know where to go" which gives people contacts of organisations that can help them when they are unwell.

Finally by making problems with stigma and lack of support known through social media sites. I have a Facebook group name "North Lanarkshire Equal Minds" in which I actively campaign for better treatment for the mentally ill. This group can be accessed by anyone and keeps all of my campaigning work together.

### **Petition background information**

1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem in their lifetime. This means that everyone will know someone who is mentally unwell or has been in the past.

The Scottish Government plans to make sure that anyone suffering from any form of mental health problem is to be seen in under 18 weeks from December 2014. Most mental health services are still excluded from the 18 week waiting time target. It is vital for someone with a mental health problem to be seen much quicker than this.

Being active and having a social life is beneficial for those people suffering with mental health problems. More services would help people and stop them from becoming unwell again. I would like there to be more support groups available for a wide range of

different people. Some people who suffer from mental ill health have a job and cannot attend groups during the day. Other people do not have a job and I feel that more help needs to be given to these people as many employers do not realise how difficult it is to go back to work after being mentally unwell.

According to the Audit Scotland report *Overview of mental health services*, "The NHS spends about £930 million a year on mental health services but this is likely to be an underestimate, and it is not known how much councils spend. The wider costs to society of mental health problems, such as people not being able to work, bring the total estimated cost to over £8 billion a year." If the right services were provided in the right way, the Scottish Government could save money and in doing so improve the lives of those suffering from mental ill health.

Due to the current economic climate, many people are becoming depressed due to financial difficulty and unemployment. By providing advice to those in these situations, less of them may become depressed if they are feeling supported.

Due to the stigma of having a mental health problem many people do not seek the help they need. Some employers, although it is illegal, will not employ those with mental health issues as they think they will be unreliable. If the stigma of mental ill health was tackled then many people who have suffered in the past could gain employment. This would also mean that those who need help will not be scared to get it.

I feel that this action is necessary because around 2 people in Scotland die everyday due to suicide. I believe that by tackling the stigma of mental ill health and providing help to people who are unwell, the suicide rate would go down and people would be more open to getting the help they need.

#### Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/mentalhealth>

#### Related information for petition

**Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?**

YES

**How many signatures have you collected so far?**

0

**Closing date for collecting signatures online**

30 / 09 / 2012

#### Comments to stimulate online discussion

I believe that the Mentally ill are not treated in the way they should be. I would like better services for people with mental health problems and I would like to tackle the Stigma surrounding mental ill health.

