

Lothian NHS Board

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By Email

Mr Franck David  
Assistant Clerk to the Public Petitions  
Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

Date 2 February 2011  
Your Ref  
Our Ref MH/EL

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Dear Mr David,

Re: Public Petition PE1384

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on this petition.

Speech and Language Therapy services in NHS Lothian aim to provide both children and adults with speech/ language communication support needs and/or swallowing difficulties a quality service delivered by appropriately qualified staff, in the right place and at the right time for patients.

Speech and Language Therapy services adhere to government, legal, professional and NHS Lothian standards which are monitored and audited via clinical governance processes.

A recent Pan Lothian Review of Speech and Language Therapy asked managers to ensure that patients are prioritised according to clinical need. Services work hard to provide an efficient and effective service within available resources. Currently this is becoming more challenging as all budgets are constrained nationally.

In NHS Lothian we are committed to providing AHP (Allied Health Professionals) services to the people of Lothian; an AHP review is underway which is considering provision of all AHP services and how to delivery them in the most effective and efficient manner.

With regard to the petition itself, we propose information is added on the subject of dispute resolution from a legal perspective regarding the duties Speech & Language Therapists now have to meet under statute from the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004/2009).



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Chair Dr Charles J Winstanley  
Chief Executive Professor James J Barbour O.B.E.  
*Lothian NHS Board is the common name of Lothian Health Board*



I am advised by Ms Nicola Whitfield, Speech & Language Therapist who was part of a national advisory group on this matter that a helpful insertion on page 3 after "For adults with aphasia" would be:

*For children and young people with additional support needs*

*Partnership working with education, other local authority colleagues and the 3rd sector, as well as with parents, ensures children's' needs are more likely to be met without recourse to dispute resolution within the legislation as laid by the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004/9) through the Additional Support Needs Tribunal for Scotland and Court of Session. Financial and service costs are implicated. Insufficient staffing levels may result in statutory duties not being met by health with timescales and tasks not being completed and more recourse to dispute resolution processes.*

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comment – we hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

**MELANIE HORNETT**  
Nurse Director