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Public Petitions Committee
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Your ref: PE1577
11th December 2015



Thank you for your letter of 28 October 2015 regarding the Public Petitions Committee's consideration of petition PE1577 (*Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to develop and provide funding for a clinical pathway and services for adults with cerebral palsy.*)

The Scottish Government wants to ensure that people living with cerebral palsy, and other such long term conditions, have access to the best possible care and support. I welcome Rachel Wallace's petition as it draws attention to an important subject, indeed I briefly discussed this with Rachel when I met her at World cerebral palsy day in Glasgow on 7th October.

The issue of access to services for adults with cerebral palsy is something that I am already aware of. During my visit to Bobath Scotland in March of this year, transition from children and young people's services to adult services was something I discussed with the people I met and their families. It was made clear to me that, in their opinion, the service provision for adults with cerebral palsy can sometimes be lacking, particularly around access to vital physiotherapy services.

After this visit I wrote to Stephanie Fraser at Bobath Scotland in May, to follow up on these discussions. Since then, my officials in the Strategic Planning and Clinical Priorities team have been in discussion with Stephanie about a pilot project on improving services for adults living with the condition. I am pleased to say that Scottish Government have agreed to support this project, this month we have provided £30,000 in grant funding to Bobath Scotland to work in partnership with West Dumbartonshire Council in this financial year. I feel this is a step in the right direction, and that learning and experiences drawn from this project will prove valuable in improving adult services across the country for people with cerebral palsy.

As requested I am enclosing a copy of the correspondence from the Chief Nursing Officer's Directorate which was referred to during the last meeting of the Committee when the petition was discussed.

My officials have looked into this and recognise that some of the language used in the letter of 21st July was not applicable to people living with cerebral palsy. Officials regret this and steps have been taken to ensure that the use of such language with regard to people living with cerebral palsy is not repeated. I would like to reassure the Committee that feedback has been provided to officials, and to offer my apologies for this error.

Finally, I would be happy to meet with Rachel Wallace and Murdo Fraser MSP to discuss the issues raised in the petition. My officials will contact Ms Wallace and Mr Fraser directly to organise a mutually acceptable time and date.

I hope that this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

JAMIE HEPBURN

Stephanie Fraser
CEO
Bobath Scotland

21 July 2015

Dear Ms Fraser

Thank you for your letter of 13 July about specialist nursing. The Scottish Government's aim is to ensure that people living with conditions, such as cerebral palsy have access to the best possible care and support. Being told you have a condition for which there may be no cure can be devastating and individuals respond to this in different ways.

It is important that a person living with a long term condition is able to decide what support they need, when it is to be delivered and by whom. Accompanied by the right advice and information, self-directed support can play a crucial role in helping people with living with a long term condition to achieve better outcomes and better quality support.

You asked about the role of AHPs in the management of cerebral palsy. As you will be aware, there are a number of professionals who can offer advice and treatment to help people with cerebral palsy to be as independent as possible, for example: physiotherapists; podiatrists or occupational therapists. There is no single treatment plan for cerebral palsy; each person's clinical pathway should take a person centred approach in relation to their individual needs. People are prioritised on the basis of need rather than condition with evidence base determining where and when therapy input is most effective. You may be interested to know that a Transformational Plan for Children and Young People's AHP Services is currently in development and will be published for consultation later this year. It will address issues such as waiting list management, access and demand management to reduce variability across Scotland.

With regard to the specialist nursing and care fund. Funds to enhance access to specialist services, including the recruitment of additional specialist nurses or AHPs have been allocated to all territorial NHS Boards who are best placed to make decisions on the most effective use of these funds locally.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely

MRS G B OVERTON