

PE1408/M

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**The Scottish
Government**
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Andrew Howlett
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The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh, EH99 1SP



LEGACY 2014
XX COMMONWEALTH GAMES
SCOTLAND

30 January 2013

Dear Mr Howlett,

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE 1408 - PERNICIOUS ANAEMIA

Thank you for your email of 13 December, about Petition PE 1408, lodged by Mrs Andrea MacArthur, which calls on the Scottish Parliament to review and overhaul the current out-dated and ineffective method of diagnosing and treating Pernicious Anaemia/vitamin B12 Deficiency. Our response to the Committee's latest question follows:

Can the Scottish Government respond to the issues raised in the Committee's letter of 29 November 2012 in regard to the Active-B12 test. In this letter, the Committee advise that at least six members of The PA Society have now undergone an Active-B12 test at the London hospital providing it, meeting costs themselves. A referral letter from a GP is currently required to access the test; Society members report that some GPs are refusing to do so. Four of the six people who underwent the test were found to have a functional B12 deficiency. Only two were able to persuade their GP to commence treatment based on the test result. This would seem to prove the diagnostic potential of the test, and also that GPs are still prepared to ignore the result of the test or enable their patient to access the test in the first place, the Committee advise.

As advised in my previous letter, the Committee will be aware that the British Committee for Standards in Haematology (BCSH) are now due to publish their guideline on B12 and folate deficiency in summer 2013.

BCSH have confirmed to us that they intend to consider the use and appropriateness of the Active-B12 Test in the development of the guideline. Once the guidance is published we will be in a better position to consider what further action may be necessary.



The Committee may be aware of the Scottish Health Technologies Group (SHTG), whose remit is to provide advice about the clinical and cost effectiveness of existing and new technologies likely to have significant implications for patient care in Scotland. Stakeholders are invited to suggest topics of interest to the SHTG. Anyone – Boards, clinicians, manufacturers, members of the public – can submit a topic referral form for consideration at: http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/clinical_cost_effectiveness/shtg/about_the_group/suggest_a_topic.aspx

A final decision about whether the topic will be progressed will be made by the SHTG Working Group and the topic referrer will be notified of the outcome.

I hope that the Committee finds this reply, the terms of which have been approved by the Minister for Public Health, helpful.

Yours sincerely

Rachael Dunk
Unit Head – Clinical Priorities