

PE1408/R

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Edinburgh
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In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World



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Dear Mr Howlett

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE 1408 - PERNICIOUS ANAEMIA

Thank you for your letter of 20 June 2014, concerning 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.

In your letter you advised that the Public Petitions Committee had further considered the petition on 17 June 2014, and had the following questions:

- **Please clarify exactly what action the Scottish Government is taking following the publication of the BCSH guidelines and to what timescale.**
- **How will the information contained in the BCSH guidelines be disseminated to GPs to ensure the best possible diagnosis and treatment of pernicious anaemia and vitamin B12 deficiency?**

I can confirm that an email from the Scottish Government was circulated to members of the Scottish Haematology Society on 25 June 2014. The Society is the principal organisation representing the specialties of laboratory haematology, clinical haematology and blood transfusion in Scotland. Membership of the Society is open to all grades of clinical and laboratory haematologists and blood transfusionists in Scotland as well as scientists and nurses working in these fields. The email informed members of the petition and alerted them to the British Committee for Standards in Haematology (BCSH) guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of cobalamin and folate disorder.

As far as the BCSH guideline is concerned, and in particular the suggestion that the usual test for B12 deficiency should continue, with second line testing where this is indicated, we understand that the second line test is not standard in the vast majority of laboratories in Scotland, therefore the impact of introducing it could be significant and will need to be

considered. Further, we have also received advice that dissemination of these guidelines in their current form to GPs could be unhelpful as they are not presented in a suitable format for use in the practice setting.

In these circumstances, we will ask the Diagnostic Steering Group, which is the national group responsible for providing advice on laboratory and imaging diagnostics, to consider these issues at their next meeting in November.

I would confirm that the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing is aware of the terms of this reply, which I hope is helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Sinead Power
Team Leader
Strategic Planning & Clinical Priorities Team