

PE1411/H

Maurice Frank Letter of 27 January 2012

I have Asperger Syndrome diagnosed and history fitting mild attention deficit too. I take part in the Scottish Autism Services Network. From a supported employment service, I had the supporter uphold to the Ingeus and Atos organisations medically that my autistic spectrum condition gives me a need of fabric sensitivity to wear shorts, and not to accept contrary dress codes in work.

Autistic spectrum diagnoses can rarely be made in early childhood, as it takes a more developed stage of life for the differences of communication and perception to be apparent. So the possibility of diagnosis exists during schooldays, and it still may be missed until adulthood. The children who do not have these conditions have not all been identified before any particular stage of school is reached. So the autistic spectrum children cannot be set part from this petition's concern as being a special case outside mainstream school policy, because even if that was done, the mainstream policy would still affect them before they are recognised.

For longer than is measurable this has been the most unmentioned silently accepted yet glaringly visible gender discrimination in all of society. Autistic spectrum awareness has shown its impact was biologically real and not trivial as assumed by teachers. Autism involves a lack of selective filtering of what the sense take in. While this affects communication and distinguishing of social cues, it also has a physical effect of sensory sensitivity. This includes sensitivity of skin towards irritation by fabrics. Labels on clothes, coarse or heavy material, and close pressing fabrics can all cause major sensory disturbance and distraction, in some cases pain. Heat and temperature can be felt differently. Autism literature terms the phenomenon "sensory issues" and it cuts across related conditions. Attention deficit is linked to a more active body, which affects this picture too. So is Tourette Syndrome, where *Passing For Normal* by Amy Wilensky (2000) describes the body like a raw surface reactive to any touch.

Maurice Frank

Mr Frank has also provided a more detailed response, available on request, where additional information is provided in relation to the following points:

(1) The "biological need for everyone at all ages to have access to such information, including on safe temperature limits to bareness of arms or legs or feet, to inform their own physical feelings." (from full version eleventh paragraph.)

(2) I declare that for my autistic health reasons I would rather have worn the girl's uniform at my school than long trousers, though I am not transgender at all. (from full version seventeenth paragraph)

(3) How these choices are more totally not available, unfairly, to a child whose schooldays are a frightening survival fight against damaging pressures to achieve highly. (from full version fourth to sixth paragraphs.)