



Presentation: COSLA Children and Young People Board

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About our organisations

National Autistic Society Scotland:

- Education Rights & Transition Helpline
- Social Groups & Post Diagnostic Support
- 15 Volunteer led branches
- Policy and campaigning
- Supported living & outreach services

Scottish Autism:

- Founded in 1968, services across Scotland
- Supported living, outreach services, day opportunities and New Struan School
- Advice Line, One-Stop-Shop, Post diagnostic support & growing online support initiatives
- Centre for Practice Innovation brings together research, policy and practice development

Together we provide the joint Secretariat for the CPG on Autism

Key issues facing autistic children and young people

- Timely access to diagnostic and post-diagnostic support
- Formal and informal exclusions from education
- Accessible health and mental health services
- Co-occurring conditions and intersecting needs
- Transition to adulthood

Some key stats

- At least 1 in 100 are autistic = 56,000 autistic people in Scotland
- Schools often report higher prevalence

From our 2018 report Not Included, Not Engaged, Not Involved report:

- 34% of parents say their autistic child has been unlawfully excluded.
- 72% felt that school staff need a better understanding of autism.

From the 2020 CPG report - 'The Accountability Gap'

- Two thirds felt they were not adequately supported through transition

Moving forward

- Improved practitioner knowledge and skills: A common baseline of content on autism during the delivery of ITE, better profiling of individual needs and specialist input beyond initiation training
- Forthcoming Member's Bill on Transition.
- Welcome proposals for neurodevelopmental pathways to aid diagnosis.

Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill

- Joint 10-year SG & COSLA Autism Strategy came to an end this year.
- *'Our Voice Our Rights'* campaign called for a Commissioner in the lead up to the May 2021 election.
- SNP manifesto committed to introducing a Commissioner as part of a new 'Autism, Learning Disability and Neurodiversity Bill' - cross-party support in several manifestos
- Programme for Government confirmed this would be scoped out during 2021-2022.

We have sound legislation to outline and identify the rights of autistic young people (GIRFEC, Equality Act) – we are seeking legislation to better deliver for this population

The Commissioner

- A protector and promoter of human rights.
- Priorities set through consultation with the community.
- A 'whole-life' approach advocating for support across the lifespan and different policy and service areas.
- Appropriate powers and duties to challenge bad practice and promote good.
- A body to whom individuals and families can turn.