

The National Autistic Society Cymru
Pembrokeshire Branch
C/O 6&7 Village Way
Greenmeadow Springs Business Park
Cardiff
CF15 7NE
03 March 2015

William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Dear William Powell,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the correspondence that you received from the Minister for Health and Social Services, Prof Mark Drakeford, on the 2 February 2015.

We are pleased to note that the establishment of a Task and Finish Group on autism diagnosis is a priority for action for 2015–2016 and that its work will inform the refresh of the Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan. My understanding is that the Group will consider diagnosis of autism for both children and adults and we welcome this development.

Waiting times for a diagnosis remains a key issue for members of the National Autistic Society Cymru's [NAS Cymru] Pembrokeshire branch and despite the measures taken by Hywel Dda Local Health Board to reduce diagnostic times for children, there is still strong local evidence that the waiting times remain lengthy.

Given our first-hand experience in this area and as the authors of the original petition calling for a timely diagnosis for children in Wales we would ask that the Petitions Committee:

- writes to the Task and Finish Group requesting that members of the NAS Cymru Pembrokeshire branch be invited to give evidence to that Group;
- requests that the seven Local Health Boards provide an update to that Group on current diagnostic waiting times for autism in both children and adults; and

Accept difference. Not indifference.

Gwahaniaeth. Nid difaterwch.

- seeks confirmation from the Minister for Health and Social Services that the Task and Finish Group's advice and recommendations be published at the end of the Group's work.

Kind regards

Lisa Phillips
Branch Officer
NAS Pembrokeshire branch