

Your President needs your action!! Please read this!!

Are people with autism happy with waiting times- for diagnosis, for GP appts, at supermarket checkouts, to enroll at Tech??

Do they get enough support? Is Speech and Language Therapy available? Are they prepared for transitions? Is respite care available? Is there sufficient understanding of their problems?

If the answer is NO to any of these or you have other concerns (I know there are many) **READ ON AND RESPOND**

Many of you will remember Dr Mike Sills the Consultant Paediatrician who helped so many families. Although he has now retired he is still very much involved in Children's Services and is passionately keen to improve things. He is working with the MP for Huddersfield, Barry Sheerman, to find out what can be done to improve autism services. They have taken this to London and Mr Sheerman is chairing the Westminster Commission for Autism.

Emily Christou is the Co-ordinator and is travelling round the country collecting facts, opinions, moans, groans and, hopefully, some good news about people's experiences.

IT IS ONLY WITH SUFFICIENT INPUT FROM THOSE HAVING, OR CARING FOR, PEOPLE WITH AUTISM, THAT ANYTHING WILL BE DONE!!

The Government needs to know what the biggest areas of need are and what works. It's no good saying that you want more educational support for your child unless it is known to make a difference. More Speech and Language Therapy will never be funded unless it is proven to be effective. There is proof that Early Intervention makes a difference - would it have made a difference to your child if they had got an earlier diagnosis?

Emily needs people with autism, or parents/carers, teachers etc., to contribute by sending her their experiences - both good and bad! If people with ASC have suffered because of lack of resources - they need to know. If they have made real progress because something was available e.g. Early Bird, The Hanen Programme, Training - they need to know.

PLEASE - if you have time, email Emily and have a look at the blog as described below.

Thanks, Kate

From Emily Christou:

"The Westminster Commission on Autism is a new group made up of parliamentarians, autistic individuals, parent advocates, health professionals, charities and service providers and is chaired by Barry Sheerman MP for Huddersfield. The group was set up in recognition of the fact that there is always more to be done to make the world a more autism-friendly place.

The commission will hold inquiries, write reports and make recommendations for policy and practice.

On the 1st December 2015, the core group met and discussed areas for inquiry. A range of topics were considered including diagnosis, employment, family support and mental health. It was felt that a strong first inquiry topic would be access to healthcare.

It is critically important that the commission is informed, guided and verified by autistic people and while a number of members are either autistic or parents, we want to reach out to many more than this. If you have experiences of navigating the health service and positive or negative stories to share PLEASE get in contact with our National Strategy Coordinator, Emily Christou (emily.christou@nccuk.org.uk). Emily would be pleased to share more information and explain how you can get involved. You can learn more by looking at our blog - <https://westminsterautismcommission.wordpress.com/2015/12/23/the-westminster-commission-on-autism-get-involved/?iframe=true>"