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27 February 2023

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to let you know that today the Scottish Government is publishing the 'Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill Scoping Report'.

For your convenience I've attached a copy of the report and its accompanying easy read version for you and your Committee. You can also find the publication (www.gov.scot/isbn/9781805255581) on the Scottish Government website.

The report outlines the findings of a pre-consultation exercise that the Scottish Government undertook with our stakeholders last year. We held 30 workshops with 18 charities and third sector organisations between May and July 2022. The purpose of the report is to reflect the views of people with lived experience, rather than set out the policy intentions.

Participants took part in a lightly structured discussion about the potential remit of a bill, its role protecting human rights, their preferred language and generated ideas for further engagement with neurodivergent communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to share a few of the key findings from the scoping report. Those who took part highlighted:

- A need to protect all neurodivergent people against discrimination by increasing inclusion and recognition of their value;
- A need to consider education and training for public bodies and neurodivergent people themselves as essential in promoting their human rights;
- The value of independent advocacy that encourages self-determination and promotes accountable, person-centred services across the lifespan;
- That the Bill should complement existing legislation, services, and public bodies that impact on the wellbeing of neurodivergent groups.

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We are now facilitating three new panels with people with lived experience, professionals and stakeholders. Working with these panels we will discuss and design a consultation exercise that will be implemented later this year.

I hope you find this helpful and look forward to working with your Committee in the future as we develop the formal consultation exercise.

I am copying this letter to the relevant cross party groups for their information.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Stewart', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kevin Stewart

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