

John Swinney MSP
Leader of the Scottish National Party

Dear John,

Learning Disabilities, Autism & Neurodivergence Bill

We are writing to you as a group of organisations who believe that the introduction of a Learning Disabilities, Autism & Neurodivergence (LDAN) Bill is essential to addressing the poor outcomes and inequalities experienced by the communities who we serve.

We were delighted that the proposed LDAN Bill received cross-party support in the run up to the last Scottish elections in May 2021. It was a significant moment for our members who, for the first time in many years, were given hope and encouragement that their place in society was recognised and valued.

We were disappointed when the decision was taken not to proceed with this legislation during the current parliamentary term. It is our view that Scotland has a responsibility to honour the cross-party commitment to legislate to tackle the systemic inequality the communities we advocate for experience on a daily basis.

Over 850 responses were received during the consultation period for this legislation. People who we support across our organisations have told their stories and relived some of their trauma with a belief that this would lead to legislative change and significant differences being made to their lives. It is no exaggeration to say that many feel disappointed and let down that the Bill was not introduced.

While there continues to be a process of developing draft policy provisions for the legislation, there is growing concern that the legislation may not be advanced in the next session of parliament.

On behalf of the communities we serve, we are therefore calling on you, and all Party Leaders in Scotland, to commit to bringing forward the Learning Disabilities, Autism & Neurodivergence Bill in the first legislative programme after the 2026 election.

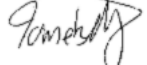
Making such a commitment in your party's manifesto for the upcoming election would make clear that addressing the poor outcomes and inequalities experienced by the people we support remains a priority and provides assurance their contributions during the consultation period, and in the continuing engagement on the draft policy provisions, weren't in vain.

We believe there is clear support across the parliament for this legislation and we are writing to all other party leaders seeking similar commitments.

A Bill which advances understanding, support and rights for some of our most marginalised citizens would be a strong statement of the sort of Scotland our incoming government wishes to build.

We hope that our members and the communities we serve can count on your commitment to this legislation and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

					
Eddie McConnell	Kirsty Kennedy-Hyman	Rob Holland	Jenny Miller	Dorry McLaughlin	Lorne Berkley
Chief Executive	Co-chair, National Self-Advocacy Forum	Director	Chief Executive	Chief Executive	Strategic Lead: Policy and Rights
Downs Syndrome Scotland	Enable Communities	National Autistic Society Scotland	PAMIS	Scottish Autism	Scottish Commission for Learning Disabilities