

On 20 February 2006, Adam Ingram MSP lodged seven questions that related to deaf and deafblind people. These questions are below, with the corresponding answers from the Scottish Executive.

S2W-23300 - Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP) (Date Lodged 20 February 2006) : To ask the Scottish Executive how much funding was available to overcome communication and language barriers for deaf and deafblind people with mental health problems in each year since 1999.

Answered by Lewis Macdonald (6 March 2006): While specific funding is not provided for these areas, NHS boards must consider with their planning partners how best to respond to the guidance issued in June 2005 on Disability Discrimination Compliance: Access to Mainstream and Specialist Services for those with Sensory Loss and a Mental Health Problems (www.show.scot.nhs.uk/sehd/mels/HDL2005_27.pdf), and will be asked to complete a joint survey on progress in July 2006. It is for each NHS board to meet the health care needs of its resident population from within the level of funding available, taking account of national and local priorities.

S2W-23299 - Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP) (Date Lodged 20 February 2006) : To ask the Scottish Executive how many clinical misdiagnoses of deaf and deafblind patients with mental health problems there were in each year since 1999, broken down by NHS board.

Answered by Lewis Macdonald (6 March 2006): This information is not collected centrally.

S2W-23298 - Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP) (Date Lodged 20 February 2006) : To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to provide training and recruitment opportunities for deaf and deafblind people to enable them to work with deaf and deafblind patients.

Answered by Lewis Macdonald (6 March 2006): NHSScotland employers appoint on merit and are committed to providing equality of opportunity to all. Employers should make all necessary reasonable adjustments to ensure that staff are able to fulfil their potential.

In addition, NHSScotland offers a range of pre-employment training opportunities which are open to deaf and deafblind people. Pre-employment training provides participants with experience of working within the NHS and valuable life skills and interview preparation. Details regarding such courses can be obtained from NHSScotland employers and Jobcentre Plus.

S2W-23297 - Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP) (Date Lodged 20 February 2006) : To ask the Scottish Executive what consultation it has undertaken with NHS boards to ensure that they are meeting their obligations under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and Disability Discrimination Act 2005 with specific regard to the treatment and care of deaf and deafblind people who have a mental health problem.

Answered by Lewis Macdonald (6 March 2006): To support effective implementation of the new Mental Health Act we have required regular progress reports from local area partnerships. These reports are published on the web. There is an on-going programme of visits with the local partners to discuss progress. The next round starts this April and will centre on delivery of the new arrangements and the Delivering for Health commitments for mental health.

By December 2006 all NHS boards will have to publish a disability equality scheme setting out their plans for tackling discrimination against disabled people and promoting equality.

Specifically on deaf and deafblind mental health needs, we have published guidance for Agencies on approaches to improved access to mainstream services for those with a sensory loss and a mental health problem a copy of which has been placed in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (Bib. number 38922). That guidance includes a commitment to follow up on progress made. A survey of local approaches will take place in July and the results will be published. Reminders have already issued to the agencies in this regard.

S2W-23296 - Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP) (Date Lodged 20 February 2006) : To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to provide out-patient and in-patient services for deaf and deafblind people with mental health problems.

Answered by Lewis Macdonald (6 March 2006): We have no plans for separate provision. Guidance published in 2005 offered approaches for improved access to mainstream services by those with a sensory loss and a mental health problem. A copy of which has been placed in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (Bib. number 38922). That guidance will inform the approaches adopted by the partner agencies in each area to meet assessed and forecast local needs.

The guidance includes a commitment to follow up, this July, on progress made by the agencies. The results will be published.

S2W-23295 - Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP) (Date Lodged 20 February 2006) : To ask the Scottish Executive how many deaf and deafblind patients were treated by the NHS in each year since 1999 by each NHS board.

Answered by Lewis Macdonald (6 March 2006): The information requested is not held centrally. National hospital activity returns hold information on patient demographics, diagnosis and any operations performed. No specific note is held of existing disabilities such as deafness and/or blindness.

S2W-23294 - Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP) (Date Lodged 20 February 2006) : To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to increase the number of consultant psychiatrists who are specially trained in working with deaf and deafblind people.

Answered by Lewis Macdonald (6 March 2006): Guidance has been published on improving access to mainstream and specialist services for those with sensory loss and a mental health problem. A copy of which has been placed in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (Bib. number 38922). It is for NHS boards to consider this guidance and determine the ongoing training needs of all its staff in the context of local service planning and delivery.

By December 2006, all NHS boards will have to publish a disability equality scheme setting out their plans for tackling discrimination against disabled people and promoting equality.