



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Justice Committee

Michael Matheson
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By email

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Dear Michael

Brain injury and offending

On 13 September 2016, the Justice Committee heard informally from Professor Tom McMillan, Chair of the Brain Injury and Offending Workstream, National Prisoner Healthcare Network on its recent report *Brain Injury and Offending*¹.

The Committee is grateful to Professor McMillan and his colleagues for their work on the report.

The Committee was interested in the recommendations made in the report and it agreed to write to you seeking further information. In the first instance the Committee would welcome confirmation from you on when the Scottish Government plans to respond to the recommendations in the report.

Additionally, the Committee specifically seeks your views on whether the Scottish Government proposes to launch pilots to assist in the early identification of brain injury in respect of two recommendations:

- Recommendation 2: Pilot an additional question on head injury in two or more (police) custody centres in two NHS board areas.

¹ <http://www.nphn.scot.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2016/07/NPHN-Brain-Injury-and-Offending-Final-Report.pdf>

- Recommendation 4: A single question about brain injury added to the NHS (Vision) interview in prison reception and triage to no action/educational material provided or screening assessment.

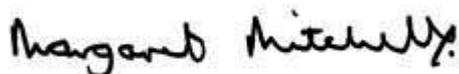
The Committee would also welcome your view on Recommendation 12 which calls for a 6-8 bed low secure brain injury rehabilitation unit in Scotland, ideally as an adjunct to an existing neuro-rehabilitation facility.

We also discussed whether there would be a benefit to introducing a single point of contact who is able to co-ordinate criminal justice and health services and ensure no individual who is identified as having a brain injury 'falls through the gap'. We would be grateful for your views.

Finally, the Committee noted page 12 of the report, which states that "the risk [of having a head injury] in women prisoners is much higher than expected and deserves specific investigation". We invite your views on whether you agree that further investigation is required into this matter, including, for instance, investigating possible links between this higher than average incidence of brain injury in female prisoners and a prior history of domestic abuse.

For information, I am also writing to the Law Society of Scotland to seek more information on assessment by defence agents of whether their clients have head or brain injuries.

I should be grateful if you could reply by 18 October.



Margaret Mitchell MSP
Convener, Justice Committee