

**SCOTTISH AUTISTIC PEOPLE'S
ORGANISATIONS JOINT MANIFESTO
SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 2026**



This manifesto sets out a **strong, values-driven agenda** centring autistic people's rights, access, and co-production in Scotland. Its focus is on:

- Clear commitment to **human rights, co-production, and equity**
- Strong emphasis on **Autistic Disable People's Organisations** (Autistic DPOs) **leadership** and lived experience
- Broad coverage across **health, justice, education, funding, and legislation**

1. Principles, Values, and Human Rights

- A clear commitment to ongoing expressions of **support and solidarity** in the face of cultural hostility, whether domestic or international.
- A commitment to the **maximalist incorporation** of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (**CRPD**)¹ across all relevant policy areas, as part of the **Human Rights Bill for Scotland**².
- A commitment to completing the Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill (**LDAN Bill**) with significantly greater input, in line with a Human Rights–Based Approach (HRBA), and through **meaningful, co-productive work** with Autistic DPOs.
- A **national ban** on **Positive Behaviour Support** (PBS) and **Applied Behaviour Analysis** (ABA) in all forms. There is ample evidence that it contravenes Human Rights and causes lifelong mental health issues³.

¹ https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convention_accessible_pdf.pdf

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/human-rights-bill-scotland-discussion-paper/>

³ <https://ndconnection.co.uk/resources/p/guide-to-pbs-aba>

2. Governance, Co-production, and Autistic Leadership

- A mandate for **closer involvement of Autistic DPOs** in legislative decision-making processes, in line with General Comment 7 of the CRPD⁴.
- Introduce a **Statutory Duty to collect disaggregated** data regarding **need and unmet need** within our community, on National and Local Government, and any other body in receipt of public funds or delivering a public service.
- Statutory **remuneration duty** for those with lived experience taking part in research and other forms of participatory activity⁵.
- In line with the principle of '**nothing about us without us**', ensuring that **National and Local Government** and other public bodies are required to: **meaningfully** engage with, and **co-produce** policy alongside **Autistic DPOs**; that **autistic people** lead and influence **funding decisions** which affect our community.

3. Funding, Social Care, and Economic Justice

- Statutory duty to **core funding** for **Autistic DPOs**.
- Increased access to the **Autistic Adult Support Fund** and other relevant funding streams, ensuring they are accessible to Autistic Disabled People's Organisations.

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no7-article-43-and-333-participation>

⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-paying-participant-expenses-compensating-time/pages/6/>

- An **end to the postcode lottery of support**, ensuring best practices and equitable provision regardless of location.
- A **full review and reform of Self-Directed Support (SDS)** legislation and statutory guidance, using a Human Rights-Based Approach that places Autistic DPOs and those with lived experience, at the heart of the process, to empower users and ensure the system is fit for purpose.

4. Health and Wellbeing

- Commitment to develop a **National Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathway**, as recommended by the Royal College of Psychiatry Scotland⁶, *Experiences of Autism Assessment and Diagnosis in Scotland Survey Report*⁷, and *Adult Developmental Pathways Report*⁸. See also [Waiting for neurodevelopmental assessments: what do the numbers say? – SPICe Spotlight](#).
- **Equitable** access to **healthcare** and **mental health** support that is neuro-affirming and appropriate for autistic people.
- **Annual health checks** for autistic people.
- **Deinstitutionalisation** in line with recommendations by the United Nations ([CRPD/C/5: Guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies \(2022\) | OHCHR](#)) and changing the present approach in line with criticism of the Coming Home Implementation Report (see [Submission in response to the](#)

⁶ <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/7qdt5xkfpmkq8e1tdreu6/rcpsychis-ndc-paper.pdf?rlkey=fneeg7vl0ktkqffd8lz98wyrr&st=aum91g20&dl=0>

⁷ <https://arghighland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Experiences-of-Autism-Assessment-Diagnosis-in-Scotland-Report-June-2025.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/nait-adult-neurodevelopmental-pathways-report/pages/2/>

5. Education, Workforce, and Training

- **Mandated autism training** across education, social work, healthcare, and frontline services, that is developed and delivered by autistic people.
- Funded access to **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)** supports, alongside training for AAC users, and wider societal training to improve understanding and acceptance of AAC (especially in the workforce).
- A **commitment to ending** children and young people **being sent away** from their homes and families **to receive** appropriate **education**.
- Create a **devolved** national **Access to Work**⁹ scheme by consolidating best practice in the present piecemeal approach, thereby making a system fit for purpose, that can close the employment and pay gap for autistic people.

6. Justice, Advocacy, and Legal Rights

- **Improved access to justice**, including training for autistics to know their rights, along with properly resourced law centres.
- Access to, and dedicated funding for: professional, **independent right advocates** across Scotland, especially in Mental Health settings and institutions.

⁹ <http://www.nao.org.uk/reports/the-access-to-work-scheme/>

- **Reform of Legal Aid** to address the **accountability gap** and current lack of access to justice for autistic and disabled people¹⁰.
- **Mandatory** autism training across **Police, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Services, Scottish Prison Service**, that is developed with and delivered by **autistic people**.

Signatories:

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¹⁰ <https://bprcdn.parliament.scot/published/EHRCJ/2025/9/17/b4eb8e78-2158-4978-bc77-ccc22aeeb906/EHRCJS062025R03.pdf>