



The Scottish
Parliament

The Rt. Hon. Alex Fergusson MSP
Galloway & West Dumfries

Mr John Denerley
'Sprucedene'
Lochfergus Plantation
KIRKCUDBRIGHT
DG6 4XX

17 August 2011

Our Ref: 2011/3642

Dear

Mr Denerley

Further to our earlier correspondence on the subject of lipreading, I enclose a copy of the response I have received from the Minister for Public Health, Michael Matheson MSP. I note that the Minister has undertaken to continue to engage with stakeholders in order to address the concerns that are being raised by you and others, and I hope that this engagement will be successful. However, I fully understand that all services are more difficult to deliver in a rural setting, and I hope you will not hesitate to contact me again with any continued concerns you may have following the Minister's process of engagement.

I hope this is of some help to you in the meantime.

Yours sincerely

Alex Fergusson

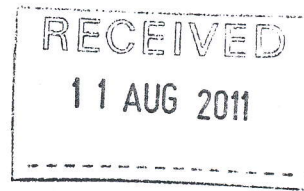
ALEX FERGUSSON MSP

Please reply to: New Market Street, Castle Douglas, DG7 1HY – 01556 504991

The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP Tel – 0131 348 5636

E-mail: Alex.Fergusson.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

Ministear airson Slàinte Poblach
Minister for Public Health
Micheal Matheson BPA
Michael Matheson MSP



F/T: 0845 774 1741
E: scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Mr Alex Fergusson MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Ur faidhle/Your ref: 2011/3647
Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2011/1011036
9 August 2011

Dear Alex,

Thank you for your letter of 2 July to Nicola Sturgeon, Cabinet Secretary for Health Wellbeing and Cities Strategy, regarding the correspondence you have received from your constituent on lipreading. I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my Ministerial remit.

We recognise that lipreading classes and the reduction of the number of tutors able to teach lipreading are important issues for those who are hard of hearing. We also understand the benefits of lipreading classes to increase confidence, assist with social integration following diagnosis, and to help reduce instances of mental health problems.

However, we also appreciate that it can be more beneficial to address the wider needs of those diagnosed with a hearing loss and those of their families, and that a broader package of support is required. There are current initiatives, such as the one-stop shop sensory impairment services, which address a range of needs rather than offering lipreading services in isolation – an approach which would only address some of the rehabilitative needs of patients.

NHS Audiology services are responsible for clinical rehabilitation which mainly focuses on hearing aid related matters. In some cases, this service extends to inviting the patient back after an initial six week period to review their progress and address any difficulties. This is often done in a group setting to encourage networking and peer support. Audiology departments also encourage the attendance of a family member/friend during this process and seek to educate them on hearing aid use in order to support the person with hearing loss.

We believe that lipreading does constitute part of the rehabilitation process for those with hearing loss, along with sign language, support groups, information services, social care and charities. Audiology departments are happy to provide patients with information on lipreading as well as other forms of support when they attend clinics, although in the past NHS Audiology services may not have necessarily been made aware of these classes. Officials have the research carried out by RNID (now known as Action on Hearing Loss) on lipreading class provision in Scotland in 2010 and will forward this to Audiology departments for dissemination.

Officials have also contacted the Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD) in relation to its Communication and Access Sub-committee's lipreading campaign. SCoD has agreed to provide information and evidence to assist with consideration of the lipreading related requests made of the Scottish Government, and we are awaiting a response. You will be aware that the Scottish Government Spending Review is currently underway and that the results of this will inform any decisions in relation to funding for lipreading. The NHS do not currently fund lipreading services as lipreading is not a clinical issue and therefore not a health service.

With regards establishing a course to train lipreading tutors, we are aware that the Scottish Course to Train Tutors of Lipreading (SCTTL) has a course in place; however, we need to know the outcome of the Spending Review later this year before we can explore this further. Discussions are currently taking place as to the way our funding is allocated, and we are looking to implement a structure which encourages more open competition.

We will continue to engage with stakeholders and the deaf community around lipreading classes, and hope that by working collaboratively we can help address some of the concerns that have been raised in the correspondence you have received.

Best wishes



Michael Matheson