

# NHS Grampian accused of failing ADHD adults

## Health: MSP demands investigation of 'unfair' policy by health body

BY CALUM ROSS

NHS Grampian was last night accused of "shocking and unfair" discrimination after it emerged that hospitals refuse to help adults with a serious mental health condition.

The health board was under fire after informing a patient that its "policy" was that no assessment or treatment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can be offered to adults unless they had been diagnosed as a child.

Labour MSP Daniel Johnson, who was diagnosed with ADHD as an adult, last night demanded that Scottish ministers intervene and order an urgent investigation.

ADHD is a behavioural disorder that includes symptoms such as hyperactivity inattentiveness, and impulsivity, and it can be linked to additional problems, such as sleep and anxiety disorders.

It is often diagnosed in childhood, but between 30% and 50% of people

continue to have symptoms in adulthood, and between 2% and 5% of adults are thought to have the condition.

Mr Johnson was diagnosed aged 35 and the Edinburgh MSP said the treatment and support he received "changed my life" and north-east patients should not be denied the same help.

He said: "I find this policy decision by NHS

Grampian shocking and unfair.

"I understand that the policy is driven by a lack of psychiatric specialists, rather than based on clinical need.

"This is a clear example of how NHS staff shortages are having a real impact on people who have or suspect they might have ADHD.

"By denying access to diagnosis and treatment, people in the NHS Grampian area will not get that support and are effectively facing a postcode lottery."

Mr Johnson urged NHS Grampian to "immediately review and change this policy", and has written to

the Scottish Government to demand an urgent investigation.

Other health boards contacted by the Press and Journal yesterday confirmed they do not operate the same policy.

An NHS Grampian spokeswoman said: "We are sorry this patient is unhappy with the decision taken.

"We cannot comment on their particular case but, speaking generally, we do keep our referral guidelines under regular review.

"We are committed to offering the highest quality service to all patients within the resources we have available."

## Health: Support charity slams 'short-sighted' decision not to treat adults with condition

The Scottish ADHD Coalition described NHS Grampian's policy on the disorder as "extremely short-sighted".

The charity was launched last year to unite the voluntary organisations that support adults and children with

attention deficit

hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in Scotland and their parents, carers and families.

Geraldine Mynors, coalition chairwoman, said refusing to help adults who were not diagnosed with ADHD as children would be



counter-productive.

“Not only is this policy discriminating

unfairly against people with a condition recognised by the World Health Organisation, it is also extremely short-sighted,” she said.

“There is a wealth of evidence showing that ADHD, if left untreated, leads to a huge cost in terms of mental health

conditions like depression, anxiety and addictions, difficulties in education and employment and increased burdens on the criminal justice system. Adults seeking assessment for ADHD generally do not do so on a whim, but because

they are struggling with mental health difficulties which have a huge impact on their day to day functioning.

“Assessment and treatment - with both medication and non-pharmacological approaches and strategies - is literally life-transforming.”

**“People will not get that support and are facing a postcode lottery”**



ACTION: Daniel Johnson MSP has received treatment for ADHD himself

