

**The Celtic Nations Autism Partnership Launch, Cardiff
30th January 2007**

We the undersigned on behalf of our respective political parties pledge our support for the Celtic Nations Autism Partnership.

We commend the Autism charities of Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland on grasping the initiative and bringing forward the Autism agenda in their respective nations. It is our hope that the joint partnership will herald a new era of greater understanding and accommodation of the unique, complex and heterogeneous challenges of Autism in the member nations. This partnership is exemplary and has the potential to cast a positive influence on Autism services far beyond the respective catchment areas of the member nations. It is an exciting and confidence inspiring development during a time when the prevalence of Autism increases, and so many Services have been found wanting.

We acknowledge that Autism requires specific accommodation and have reflected this in the unanimous support for the N Ireland Autism Act both in the Autism NI (PAPA) campaign and in the recent debate in the Northern Ireland Assembly which unanimously supported the Assembly Motion calling for the Northern Ireland Autism Act.

Autism has united all political parties in N Ireland; whilst the political future in N Ireland remains uncertain we all remain steadfast as parties and individuals in our support for the N Ireland Autism Act.

We commend our local charity Autism NI (PAPA) in their campaign for social justice for people with Autism and pledge to work with them to secure a better future for all individuals on the spectrum of Autism.

We are confident the Celtic Nations Autism Partnership will make a positive, profound and long lasting impact in the member nations.



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

Signed:

Kieran McCarthy, MLA	Alliance Party
Jeffrey Donaldson, MP, MLA	DUP
Rev William McCrea, MP, MLA	DUP
Iris Robinson, MP, MLA	DUP
Sammy Wilson, MP, MLA	DUP
Dominic Bradley, MLA	SDLP
Carmel Hanna, MLA	SDLP
Patsy McGlone, MLA	SDLP
Barry McElduff, MLA	Sinn Fein
Martin McGuinness, MP, MLA	Sinn Fein
John O'Dowd, MLA	Sinn Fein
Rev Robert Coulter, MLA	UUP