

Ireland National Autism Organisation

PAPA have developed many layers of activity in the 15 years since the first parents and professionals from all over N Ireland met for support and to share information in a room in an adult centre in Lisburn.

There have been many milestones in our campaign to raise the profile of autism since the day we acquired an attic office above a cafe in the Lisburn Road in Belfast.

Perhaps the most daunting recognition of this Charity's profound significance in the history of the autism movement in N Ireland came recently in the form of the following Early Day Motion at Westminster which has been supported by Parliamentarians across the house. This achievement enables PAPA to represent the N Ireland autism community more effectively at Westminster and in Europe.

Early Day Motion

That this House commends Parents and Professionals and Autism (PAPA) as Northern Ireland's autism organisation since 1990; further commends PAPA's pioneering innovative work responding to a demonstrable constituency of families with autistic spectrum disorders; further commends PAPA's capacity and practice for discerning needs from families, both informing policy makers, and shaping services; further commends the PAPA NI evaluation and establishment of appropriate TEACCH training in statutory services; further commends the 1997 PAPA NI study on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Services into Diagnostic Services, highlighting the need for (a) professional diagnostic training, (b) specific referral routes and (c) an interagency approach; further commends the PAPA NI led Diagnostic Scoping Study resulting in a diagnostic special interest group; further commends the 2002 Education Task Group investigation into ASD provision in schools in Northern Ireland, initiating specialised autism specific training with PAPA NI; further commends the PAPA NI keyhole research, identifying the needs of pre-school children and families, to develop home based intervention programmes for pre-school children, enhancing provision for them, and exploring the efficacy of small groups in parent support; further commends the PAPA NI Connecting with Autism Project currently being evaluated by Ulster University, empowering parents to work with their children; and further commends the 2005 PAPA NI specialised training wing, officially commended by the Department of Health and Social Services.

This motion has been supported by N Ireland Members of Parliament and is now gaining support throughout the House

What is an Early Day Motion?

Early day motion (EDM) is a colloquial term for a notice of motion given by a Member for which no date has been fixed for debate. EDMs exist to allow Members to put on record their opinion on a subject and canvass support for it from fellow Members. In effect, the primary function of an EDM is to form a kind of petition that MPs can sign

The tabling of an EDM is a device to draw attention to an issue and to elicit support for it by inviting other MPs to add their signatures: an MP would not expect their EDM to be debated. MPs can also table amendments to existing EDMs.

EDMs, amendments and names of signatories are circulated in the Vote Bundle, the daily working papers of the House of Commons. EDMs can often attract a great deal of publicity, and many people regard them as a gauge of opinion.