



Zoe Connor
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Our Reference: 202600527226

Your Reference: FAO: Caroline Lamb Re: re: Preventable death from malnutrition in children and adults with selective eating – urgent national action required

4 August 2026

Dear Zoe,

Thank you for your email of 8 July 2026 to Caroline Lamb, Director General of Health and Social Care regarding malnutrition in children and adults with selective eating. Ms Lamb receives a large volume of correspondence and I hope you will understand that it is not always possible for her to reply personally to each case. As a member of the team which has policy responsibility for eating disorders, I have been asked to reply on Ms Lamb's behalf.

The Scottish Government remain committed to improving eating disorder services in Scotland and are continuing to deliver the recommendations from the [National Review of Eating Disorder Services in 2021](#), including publication of the [National Specification for the Care and Treatment of Eating Disorders in Scotland](#) in November 2024.

We have established the [National Eating Disorder Network](#), to support implementation of the Specification across NHS Boards and deliver on the remaining medium and long-term recommendations from the Review.

The specification aims to ensure that everyone has access to a high-quality standard of service regardless of what stage they are in their recovery and is for care across all stages of treatment, from primary care to specialist inpatient care.

This includes supporting people to access the right care at the right time for ARFID, Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder. We know ARFID is a complex condition that is not easily recognised and often presents with other health conditions and neurodivergence.

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The specification makes clear that ED services have specialist pathways, that include joint working with other services, developed in partnership with people with living/lived experience, for individuals with specific considerations (including ARFID).

We continue to work with NHS Boards and other partners to support implementation of the specification through a phased approach over the next five years.

We recognise that there is a lot of work to be done to develop effective ARFID pathways in Boards. The Scottish Government asked NHS Boards in May 2025 to complete a self-assessment tool, scoring their delivery and implementation of the [National Specification for the Care and Treatment of Eating Disorders](#) across CAMHS and adult services.

The review of responses highlighted encouraging progress and examples of innovation across a number of Boards, providing a better understanding of the progress Boards are making in implementing the Specification and also highlighting areas where support from Scottish Government would be most helpful.

One of these areas was ARFID, and we are currently exploring how best to support the development of good practice guidance for Boards. However, we recognise that this work will take time and will require close collaboration with partners and stakeholders to ensure the guidance is informed, practical and effective.

Members of the core National Eating Disorders Network team, including the Chair and two Clinical Advisers, alongside Scottish Government policy officials, attended an ARFID Roadshow event on 20 May. The event brought together a wide range of professionals and provided valuable insight into current discussions, research and emerging practice. We are now considering how learning from this work can be translated into practice within the Scottish context.

I would also like to highlight the development of content pages and videos featuring people with lived experience, clinicians and parents/carers through Scottish Government funding. This includes a page below on ARFID:

- [Eating disorders | NHS inform](#)
- [Avoidant restrictive food intake disorder \(ARFID\) | NHS inform](#)
- [Eating disorder resources | NHS inform](#)
- [Looking after yourself while supporting someone with an eating disorder | NHS inform](#)

You also may be interested to know that a new learning site has been developed for staff who support children, young people and adults experiencing an eating disorder. The site brings together resources and training for professionals across health, social care, third sector and education. It will continue to be updated over time as new information and learning materials become available. This work supports the National Specification which emphasises the importance of workforce training. The learning resources can be accessed via this [link](#) (please note that you will need a Turas account to access all resources.)

You may already be aware that, since the Covid-19 pandemic, we have provided eating disorder charity Beat with funding to provide a range of support services, such as their dedicated helpline support and delivering peer support services.

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This financial year, we have provided over £600,000 to Beat. This includes funding towards the Lived Experience Panel who support the work of the [National Eating Disorder Network](#).

The panel brings together individuals of different ages and experiences of eating disorders. Members provide advice and evidence from the perspective of lived experience in order to inform the ongoing delivery of the recommendations of the Review and support the work of the [National Eating Disorder Network](#).

Beat also provide a number of ARFID online supports, which can be found [here](#). This includes peer support groups for those caring for a young person with ARFID.

Thank you again for your email. Please be assured that the Scottish Government is actively considering how best to advance work on ARFID pathways. We would be pleased to keep you informed of developments, and if you would like to receive updates through the National Eating Disorders Network newsletter, please get in touch via Hannah.Deane@gov.scot and we can add you to the mailing list.

Yours sincerely

Hannah Deane
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