**Refreshed Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan Wales**

**Consultation questions response form**

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Do you agree to be identified in the list of responses? Yes

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| **Consultation questions** | **Response** |
| **Chapter Two****Awareness raising, Information and Training**Do you agree with our proposals to improve awareness of ASD:* To develop and promote the ASDinfowales website.
* To provide information and training to professional groups.
* To continue to develop resources for people with autism, their parents and carers.

Are there specific areas where we need to do more to raise awareness and provide information, training and development? | We agree that the ASDInfowebsite is a valuable resource and would be keen to discuss how we could support the development of further resources relating to the speech, language and communication needs of those on the autism spectrum. Any resources produced should align and avoid duplication with high quality information available on other websites such as the National Autistic Society.We would welcome further information on training plans for professional groups including details on how such training would be funded. Speech and language therapists have a key role in educating/training others involved in the care of those with ASD, including the family, health, education and social care staff and we would wish to be actively involved in plans.Members have highlighted to us very successful training days which were developed jointly by key representatives from health, children’s services, education, the voluntary sector, parents and service users in Cardiff and Vale.  The tier 1 training –‘ identifying children’s needs’ was aimed at practitioners who may be working with children or young people and identify some issues or concerns with regard to their development.   The audience for the courses included professionals such as generic health visitors, trainee / new speech and language therapists, foundation phase staff, playgroup workers, childcare providers, youth workers and social workers.The tier 2 course- working with children on the autism spectrum was aimed at practitioners who already work with children & young people on the autism spectrum, with a focus on how to meet their needs in a range of settings.  The audience included professionals such as SEN health visitors, community SLTs, people working in education settings, support staff from the voluntary sector, social workers, youth workers, SEN careers advisors, GPs and paediatric dental staff. The courses have run very successfully for the previous seven years. Attendance has averaged at 160 professionals per year with an average % spread of 35% education staff, 20% health staff and 45% other service areas (such as police, third sector, youth offending service, college staff, leisure centre staff etc). Feedback from courses has been excellent and value added has been evidenced in terms of the knowledge of the participants. However future funding for the courses is currently unclear. We all have available examples of SLT involvement in training for service providers on working with adults with autism. We would urge Welsh Government to consider existing good practice in relation to training such as the courses mentioned above and clarify how this will be delivered and how it may be funded. We would be happy to provide further information on training developed with SLT involvement. |
| **Chapter Three** **Assessment, Diagnosis and Support**Do you agree with our plans to improve diagnostic services for children and young people through the T4CYP programme?Do you agree with our plans to deliver an integrated autism service for Wales which will seek to improve diagnostic services for adults?What more could we do to improve diagnostic services and support for children and their families?What more could we do to improve diagnostic services and support for adults?  | Members have been closely involved in work streams relating to plans to improve diagnostic services for children and young people through the T4CYP plan and believe changes will lead to a more co-ordinated, timely diagnostic process.We support the concept of an integrated autism service for Wales. However we are concerned that we have yet to see further detail on how the proposed service will look and who will be involved. We would wish to see a detailed plan developed with key stakeholders and consulted upon.In terms of improving diagnostic services and support for adults, we wish to highlight the need to ensure SLTs are part of the core diagnostic team given likely continuing needs around speech, language and communication. |
| **Chapter Four** **Addressing support needs**Do you agree with our proposals to deliver an integrated autism service in Wales to prioritise the unmet needs of adults with autism and develop support services?What other areas of support for people with autism need to be addressed as a priority?  | As above, we are supportive of the concept of theintegrated autism service in Wales but do not feel we currently have the detail or proposals required to comment on whether the new service will prioritise the needs of adults with autism. We would wish to highlight the need to ensure that SLTs are integral members of services and multi agency teams supporting adults with ASD, their families and carers. Whilst this is commonplace within children services, it is far less so within adult services. SLT involvement is key as adults with this condition may still require intervention and support particularly when life circumstances change, e.g. transition from school to college. Persons with autistic spectrum disorders also remain at risk as defined by the Incapacity Act and speech and language therapists are integral to assessing competence for consenting etcetera.We strongly recommend that the area of speech, language and communication needs support for adults needs to be addressed as a priority.  |
| **Chapter Five** **Education and Employment**Do you agree with our plans to ensure the needs of children, young people and adults with ASD are supported in our education and employment policies? What else can we do to improve education support for children, young people and adults? What else can we do to improve employment support for young people and adults? | We strongly agree that supporting the needs of children, young people and adults should be a crosscutting theme and considered within all pertinent education and employment policies. We understand that the Additional Learning Needs Bill proposes to extend legislation to cover those young people aged 18-25. We are aware that transition planning, supporting young people to move from children to adult services and commissioning gaps regarding speech and language therapy services for young people aged 19-25 have been issues of concern in England where similar legislative reforms have been introduced. We believe that a scoping exercise needs to be undertaken to ascertain the number of young people in each Local Health Board/Local Authority area who would require access to adult services and the potential impact. Also significant work will need to be undertaken with further education to ensure appropriate support is in place for young people with ASD.As noted in detail above, we believe SLTs have a key role to play as part of integrated teams in order to improve support for adults with ASD. We would be keen to explore potential opportunities with regard to improving employment support, utilising our specialist skills in supporting communication needs.  |
| **Chapter Six** **Delivering the priorities for action**What are your views on our plans to publish a delivery plan to help us deliver and monitor the implementation of the refreshed Action Plan? What are you views on our plans to establish an ASD Implementation Advisory Group, to include a range of stakeholders including people with autism?What else do you think should be done to ensure we deliver the priorities for action and monitor progress? | We would wish to see the development of a detailed delivery plan and a more co-ordinated approach to training and awareness raising. In our view, this plan should cover outcomes, key actions noting who is responsible, timescales and funding and how impact will be measured. Such an approach would support effective scrutiny by an Implementation advisory group. |
| Do you have any other comments about the priorities for action identified in the refreshed ASD SAP and our plans for delivery and monitoring implementation?Are there any further priorities for support which should be addressed in this action plan? |  |