



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Autistic Spectrum Disorder Interim Delivery Plan 2015 - 2016

April 2015

Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Interim Delivery Plan 2015 - 2016

Foreword by the Minister for Health and Social Services

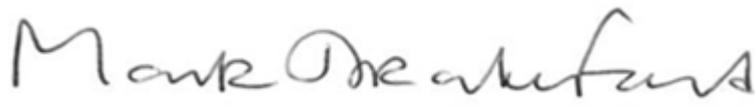
Wales was the first UK nation to take a strategic approach to autism by publishing the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Strategic Action Plan in 2008. Since then partners across statutory and voluntary agencies have worked together with stakeholder groups to develop local services which have helped to make a real difference to the lives of individuals with autism and their parents and carers.

The Welsh Government has made a commitment to build on the success achieved so far by refreshing the ASD Strategic Action Plan. I am very grateful to all those who have provided their views on the priorities for action, and for work being undertaken by the ASD Stakeholder Advisory Group to turn the priorities into practical actions that we can take forward.

Set against the backdrop of sustained austerity with increasing demands on limited public resources we have to do more to encourage partnership working between public services and families to ensure individuals who are in need of care and assistance receive the support they need to live fulfilling and meaningful lives.

In recent years we have introduced significant legislative and policy changes which will have an impact on disabled people which include individuals with autism. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, which comes into force in April 2016, will transform how people will receive social care services in the future giving them more voice and control over the care and support they receive, and will provide new rights for carers to help them continue in their essential role. We are also reforming Additional Learning Needs policy to ensure that we meet the needs of all Welsh learners and we want to do more to improve longer term outcomes for young people by increasing training and employment opportunities through our Youth Engagement Framework.

As we are in a period of such rapid change stakeholders have advised me that we should take forward the most pressing priorities for action as soon as possible, allowing more time to take a strategic approach to the development of the refreshed ASD Strategic Action Plan. This interim delivery plan therefore sets out what we want to achieve over the next 12 months. The outcomes will inform decisions on reaching our longer term goals. I also want to ensure that people with autism and their parents and carers are engaged with our plans and have a leading role in shaping future services and support. We will be speaking directly to stakeholder groups over the next 12 months to gather their views on where we need to place our focus in the coming years.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a thin black rectangular border.

Mark Drakeford AM
Minister for Health and Social Services

Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Interim Delivery Plan 2015 - 2016

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Introduction

The interim ASD Delivery Plan sets out the actions we will take to address the most pressing priorities for action identified by stakeholders and to meet the commitments already made to improve services and support for people with autism. Over the next twelve months we will work with our partners to implement these actions and will consider how the outcomes achieved can inform the development of the longer term refreshed ASD Strategic Action Plan (ASD SAP) which we will publish during 2016.

The ASD Stakeholder Advisory Group has provided advice and guidance on the actions contained within the interim ASD Delivery Plan and the group will continue to work collaboratively over the next year to advise on the future direction of the refreshed action plan. The external membership of the stakeholder group can be found at appendix one.

What have we achieved so far?

The ASD Strategic Action Plan was published in 2008 and since then significant improvements have been achieved to provide additional support and services for people with autism and their families and carers. The most notable achievements have been to:

- establish an ASD infrastructure across local authorities with ASD Leads, stakeholder groups and Action Plans;
- improve our understanding of the needs of children, young people and adults with autism through commissioning independent research which includes children's diagnostic services; employment outcomes for young people with ASD and the needs of older people with autism;
- support the development of the Wales Autism Research Centre and the Chair in Autism at Cardiff University;
- establish the Community Monitoring Support Project across Wales to support adults with Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism;
- fund wide ranging and innovative small regional projects to meet locally identified needs;
- introduce the role of the ASD Employment Ambassador to raise awareness of autism amongst large employers in Wales;
- establish the All Wales Autistic Spectrum Disorder Pre/Post Diagnostic Network for Adults to develop diagnostic and support services for adults;
- raise awareness of autism through the provision of advice and training for people with autism, their parents and carers;
- provide training and advice for a wide range of professionals working with people with autism and their families;
- provide an on-line ASD resource through the www.asdinfo.wales.co.uk website.

More information on the main initiatives can be found at appendix two.

In 2012 we commissioned an independent evaluation of the ASD Strategic Action Plan and the interim reports have helped us identify its achievements, the lessons learnt and where improvements can be made for the future. We will be publishing the evaluation report during 2015 and the findings will be used to develop the refreshed ASD action plan.

Aim of the Interim Delivery Plan

Over the last twelve months the ASD Stakeholder Advisory Group has worked together to provide advice and guidance on the priorities for future action. It has also been a time of significant change in the development of legislation and policy which may affect the lives of people with autism and their families. As the impact of many of these changes are as yet unknown, the ASD Stakeholder Group advised us that we need to take more time to consider their potential impact so that we can develop a long term refreshed action plan which takes into account the new ways of working that are being put in place.

The changes which may have the most significant impact include the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act which will come into force in April 2016, and the reform of Additional Learning Needs which also requires new legislation. In 2016 we are also re-launching the grants which we make available for voluntary sector organisations to support social services. The new Sustainable Social Services Grant Scheme will be available for voluntary sector groups to apply for, including charities which support people with autism. There are also plans being developed to re-organise local government in Wales, with a proposal to reduce the number of local councils, potentially having an impact on the delivery of local services. Outside Wales there are also likely to be changes to internationally recognised criteria for the diagnosis of autism (ICD 10) which may have some impact on future diagnostic practice.

This interim ASD Delivery Plan explains how we will support autism services over the next year, and how we are working to support the development of the refreshed ASD Strategic Action Plan for 2016.

The immediate priorities for action identified by stakeholders are:

- to seek improvements to diagnostic services for children and adults;
- to identify unmet need and develop sustainable support services;
- to raise awareness of autism through the provision of expert information and advice;
- to develop and deliver high quality training to key professional groups who support people with autism;

continued;

- to seek improvements in education, employment and training support for people with autism;
- to ensure continued engagement with stakeholders on the future priorities for action;
- to complete the refreshed ASD Strategic Action Plan.

To ensure that we fully consider the specific needs of children, Welsh speakers and groups protected by equality legislation we have commenced the relevant regulatory impact assessments such as the Equality Impact Assessment, the Children's Regulatory Impact Assessment and the Welsh Language Impact Assessment. We will complete all of the required impact assessments prior to the publication of the refreshed ASD Strategic Action Plan.

Next Steps

The interim ASD Delivery Plan will be implemented from April 2015 and will involve continued partnership working across all of the agencies supporting people with autism, including the voluntary sector.

The work that is undertaken over the next year will inform future direction of the refreshed strategy and this will be considered alongside the forthcoming changes to government policy and legislation.

It is important that we hear directly from people with autism and their parents and carers. We will be undertaking more stakeholder events to seek individual's views about how the ASD Strategic Action Plan should be developed and what can be done to make a real difference to improve the lives of people with autism, their families and carers.

Interim Delivery Plan Actions 2015 - 2016

Actions	Responsibility	By When
<p><u>Action One</u> - To secure improvements in ASD diagnostic services for children, young people and adults by:</p> <p>Establishing an ASD Diagnostic Task and Finish Group which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide expert advice on how diagnostic services can be improved and waiting times reduced. • contribute and advise on a mapping exercise for existing ASD services across public services, in comparison with NICE guidelines on referral, assessment and diagnosis of autism. <p>Continuing support for the All Wales ASD Adults Diagnostic Pre and Post Counselling Network Community of Practice, to improve collaboration and share good practice on adult diagnosis and support.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government will establish a diagnostic task and finish group to agree the priorities for action and will work in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector organisations.</p>	<p>From April 2015, with a final report provided by January 2016.</p> <p>The network will provide a six monthly update report.</p>

<p>Action Two - To identify and address the unmet needs of children and adults with autism by:</p> <p>Developing options for an integrated autism service to identify unmet need and to address the most acute gaps in services and support.</p> <p>Identifying the gaps in support during transitions for children, young people and adults across services.</p> <p>To continue the Community Monitoring Project to support adults with unmet needs and to consider how the role could be developed as part of an integrated autism service.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government working in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector agencies.</p>	<p>From April 2015 – an update report on the progress achieved in developing an integrated approach will be provided by January 2016.</p> <p>Welsh Government to receive a six monthly progress report.</p>
<p>Action Three - To ensure children, young people and adults with autism and professionals working to support them have access to accurate and updated information and advice by:</p> <p>Continuing the National ASD Co-ordinator role to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide statutory and voluntary sector organisations with expert advice and to host the ASD Learning Improvement Network. • maintain and develop the ASD info website, providing up to date ASD information, advice and support. 	<p>The Welsh Government working in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies.</p>	<p>From April 2015, progress updates will be provided six monthly.</p>
<p>Action Four - To raise awareness and provide training for</p>		

<p>professionals working to support children, young people and adults with autism by:</p> <p>Developing awareness raising and training packages for professionals including schools, GP practices, learning disabilities teams and mental health teams.</p> <p>Developing the ASDinfoales website resources so they are a source of reliable advice and guidance for professional groups.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government working in partnership with the statutory and voluntary agencies.</p>	<p>From April 2015, training packages and resources to be developed.</p>
<p><u>Action Five</u> - To ensure that children, young people and adults with autism have their education, training and employment support needs met by:</p> <p>Ensuring the reform of Additional Learning Needs legislation fully considers the specific needs of children and young people with autism, including those with co-existing conditions.</p> <p>Working in partnership with Careers Wales and Work Based Learning providers to ensure there is practical support available for young people and adults with autism to find and maintain training opportunities and employment.</p> <p>Continue to develop proposals for the second round of Dormant Accounts money – which will focus on an employability programme for young people with learning difficulties (including ASD).</p> <p>Continuing the role of the Employment Ambassador to raise awareness of autism amongst companies in Wales.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government in partnership with Careers Wales and Work Based Learning Providers.</p>	<p>From April 2015, an update report to be provided by January 2016.</p> <p>The Employment Ambassador will report on progress twice yearly.</p>

<p>Action Six - To develop the refreshed ASD Strategic Action Plan (ASD SAP) as a long term approach to supporting people with autism by:</p> <p>Continuing the work of the ASD Stakeholder Advisory Group to guide development of the refreshed action plan including providing advice on improving transition support.</p> <p>Publishing the independent evaluation of the ASD Strategic Action Plan and seeking views on how recommendations for change can be addressed.</p> <p>To engage directly with local stakeholder groups to seek their feedback on the future focus for the refreshed ASD SAP.</p> <p>To monitor the use of the local authority infrastructure grant funding by local authorities as it is transferred into the Revenue Support Grant.</p>	<p>Welsh Government working with the ASD Stakeholder Advisory Group.</p>	<p>The refreshed ASD Strategic Action Plan will be published in 2016.</p> <p>The ASD evaluation will be published by summer 2015.</p> <p>Engagement events to be held.</p> <p>Welsh Government to request update from local authorities by September 2015.</p>
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Appendix One

External Members of the ASD Stakeholder Advisory Group

EXTERNAL MEMBERS		
Simon Burch	Director of Social Services Monmouthshire County Council	From Sept 2013- July 2014
Jim Crowe	Director, Learning Disability Wales	From Sept 2013- to date
Nadine Honeybone	Parent/Founder of Autism Directory	From Sept 2013- to date
Professor Sue Leekam	Director, Wales Autism Research Centre, Cardiff University	From Sept 2013- to date
Robert Lloyd Griffiths	Autism Employment Ambassador	From Sept 2013- Nov 2014
Johanna Manikiza	ASD – National Co-ordinator	From Sept 2013- July 2014
Naomi Alleyne	Welsh Local Government Association	From Dec 2013- to date
Darrell Clarke	Welsh Local Government Association	From Dec 2013- Apr 2014
	Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC ASD Lead	
Hugh Morgan OBE	Chief Executive Officer, Autism Cymru	From Sept 2013- May 2014
Joe Powell	Director, All Wales People First	From Sept 2013 to date
Meleri Thomas	External Affairs Manager, National Autistic Society	From Sept 2013 to date
Kevin Tribble	General Manager, Child and Adolescent Services, Hywel Dda Local Health Board	From Sept 2013- May 2014
Sundari Umapathy	Consultant Psychiatrist Intellectual Disability, Aneurin Bevan Health Board	From Sept 2013 to date
Dr David Williams	Clinical Director, Child and Mental Health Services, Aneurin Bevan Health Board	From Sept 2013 to date
Christine Griffiths	Welsh Therapies Advisory Committee	From Dec 2013- July 2014
Jackie Elias	Caerphilly County Borough Council	From Arp 2014 to date
Bernard Boniface	Monmouthshire County Council	From Jul 2014 to date

Summary of ASD Strategic Action Plan key achievements:

ASD Infrastructure

Since 2008 the Welsh Government has provided each local authority with £40,000 annual funding to establish and maintain the ASD infrastructure across all local authorities in Wales. Each local authority has a designated ASD Lead and a multi agency stakeholder group. The network is supported by the National ASD Co-ordinator who hosts the ASD Learning Improvement Network, bringing together ASD leads from across Wales to raise awareness of autism and to share good practice initiatives. From 2015-16 onwards this grant will be placed in the local authority Revenue Support Grant (RSG) which is the main funding provided to local authorities each year.

The transfer of the grant has been agreed, and is consistent with the principles agreed between the Welsh Local Government Association and the Welsh Government that specific grants should transfer into the settlement at the earliest opportunity. It will also give local authorities the surety that this funding is available year on year.

The existing ASD infrastructure in Wales has been built through successful collaborative working and good practice. The Minister for Health and Social Services has written to each local authority to encourage them to consider the benefits the ASD infrastructure has brought to their areas, and how it could support the delivery of the new duties in relation to preventative services as part of the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. We will maintain a close interest in the deployment of the infrastructure grant as we want to assure individuals and families that investment in provision for people with autism has not been detrimentally affected by the transfer of funding into the RSG.

The Welsh Government will continue to support the local authority infrastructure through funding the ASD National Co-ordinator role which provides expert advice, and hosting the ASD Learning Improvement Network promoting collaborative working and sharing good practice.

ASDinfoWales Website www.asdinfo.wales.co.uk

This website is developed by the ASD National Co-ordinator and is primarily aimed at those working with children and adults with autism. It provides information about, local services and a range of resources produced as a direct result of the ASD Strategic Action Plan for Wales. The website also offers the ASD Aware scheme for employers to raise their awareness of autism in the workplace.

The website offers many well received resources for both professionals and the individuals and families they work with. Examples include:

- Autism: A Guide for Parents and Carers Following Diagnosis;
- Resources for adults with ASD and their carers;
- ASD Planner – assistance with travel planning;
- Orange Wallet Scheme;
- Employment Resources;
- ASD Videos for parents and carers;
- ASD advice for primary healthcare professionals.

All Wales Autistic Spectrum Disorder Pre/Post Diagnostic Network for Adults

Since 2010 the Welsh Government has supported Local Health Boards to work collaboratively to establish a consistent approach to diagnostic services for adults with autism. The network has developed and supported diagnostic training for clinicians and meets regularly to develop services and share good practice. The Network is developing a Community of Practice aimed at bringing together specialists in this area to share their experiences and to advance the development of services.

ASD Employment Ambassador

Since 2010 the Welsh Government has supported the role of the ASD Employment Ambassador. The role was introduced to raise awareness of autism in the workplace, particularly amongst larger anchor companies and to encourage employers to consider the benefits that employing people with autism can bring to their organisation. This role has recently been re-appointed and the renewed focus will be to make positive links between employers and organisations which can offer specialist training and employment support for both the individual and their employer.

Community Monitoring Support Projects

Since 2010 regional Community Monitoring Support Projects have been funded to provide additional support for adults with Asperger syndrome, particularly those who may not be eligible for social care services but may at times have significant support needs. The project workers are a point of contact and support, offering assistance and advice to enable individuals to navigate their way through complex services, and also to provide help in other areas of their lives such as employment issues. The interim findings of the independent evaluation of the ASD Strategic Action Plan found that there was a continued need for this type of service, which will be considered as part of the consideration of a future integrated ASD service.

Wales Autism Research Centre

The Wales Autism Research Centre (WARC) in Cardiff University was launched in 2010 and has received Welsh Government funding to support its development, which has included support for the UK's first Chair in Autism.

WARC undertakes research in the field of autism and has provided invaluable advice to the Welsh Government, being a member of the ASD Stakeholder Advisory Group. It has also supported the development of diagnostic training by the All Wales ASD Adults Diagnostic Pre and Post Counselling Network for Adults.