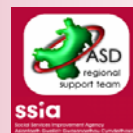


The ASD Strategic Action Plan for Wales

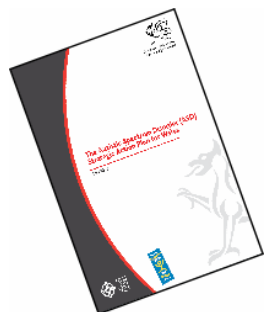


public newsletter

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The ASD Strategic Action Plan for Wales

The ASD strategic action plan for Wales was published in April 2008. Wales is the first country in the world to create an all-age strategy for Autism. The Plan created a number of funded actions on how local services can best meet the needs of young people and adults with ASD. When the plan was published the Welsh Assembly Government allocated £5.4m of dedicated funding for ASD over three years to the 22 local authority areas in Wales to help them develop local ways to meet the needs of people with ASD



How is the ASD Strategic Action Plan being delivered?

After the publication of Wales' ASD Strategic Action Plan, ASD it was important that the development of services were supported at a regional, national and local level. Key people are now working together to create services for individuals with ASD and share good practice across Wales. At a national level to drive forward the overall delivery of the action plan there is an ASD Implementation Manager based in the Welsh Assembly Government. At a regional level there is a small ASD Regional Support Team, based in the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) who support local areas to work together and develop regional initiatives. At a local level each local authority area has an ASD lead officer, an ASD Local Action Plan that was developed and will be implemented and reviewed via a Local Stakeholder Group. For information about your Local Action Plan and / or Local Stakeholder Group, please e mail enquiries to ASDinfo@WLGA.gov.uk.



This Newsletter

This newsletter provides updates for people with autistic spectrum disorders, their family and carers about progress being made by the Welsh Assembly Government in the delivery of the ASD Strategic Action Plan for Wales.



In October 2010, a new public website called 'ASD Matters' will be launched. The site will hold lots of information about ASD and the way in which the ASD Strategic Action Plan is making a difference across Wales. Future editions of this newsletter will be available via the site but in the meantime will be distributed by email and by hard copy at events.

An Autism Research Centre For Wales

On 2nd April 2010, the Wales Autism Research Centre (WARC) in Cardiff University commenced operation and will be formally launched on 23 September. The Centre's Director is Professor Sue Leekam who is also the Chair in Autism and Sue and her team of researchers will be undertaking new and exciting research in the field of Autism. Whilst this project was initiated by Autism Cymru who formed a partnership with the research funding charity Autistica and with Cardiff University, the Welsh Assembly Government have been actively involved in funding this project which firmly places Wales on the world autism research map. To find out more about the work of the centre visit <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/psych/home2/warc/>.

Awareness Raising Materials

The Welsh Assembly Government is currently developing a range of awareness raising materials for groups of professionals. These materials will help to raise awareness of autistic spectrum disorders and will target a variety of different professionals and organisations, including GP surgeries, schools, the criminal justice system, dentists and opticians, older persons services, clergy and leisure providers. Representatives from a wide range of organisations are involved in creating the materials. They will be available later in the year on the new WAG website called 'ASD Matters'.



Older Person's Research

The world currently knows very little about what happens to people with autism when they approach and then reach pensionable age. So, WAG asked Glamorgan and Bangor Universities to look into the needs of older people with autism. This research has now been completed and series of recommendations made. WAG have now asked Professor Sue Leekam, our Chair in Autism, to work with key people to make proposals for the future to Ministers by 30th November, this year.

Regional Projects

From April 2010, 22 new autism projects are to be delivered at local and regional levels and have received funding from the Welsh Assembly Government. These new projects will benefit individuals with ASD, their family and carers. The Welsh Assembly Government have made it a condition that, if successful, these projects will be shared across Wales in due course.



Many of these projects are new and exciting and will help to create better services and understanding for individuals with ASD. Some examples include:

- An information booklet to provide information for families and carers after diagnosis
- Training in undertaking ASD assessments for professionals
- Development of social networking sites for young people with ASD and parents / carers

Further information and updates about the projects will be included in the next ASD Strategic Action Plan for Wales Newsletter.

Additional Funding for Adults with ASD in Wales



Following the publication of the Strategic Action Plan, a group met to look at the needs of Adults with ASD in Wales. This 'Adults with ASD Task and Finish Group' produced a report which considered the needs of Adults with ASD and recommended ways in which these needs could be met.

In response to this report Gwenda Thomas, Deputy Minister for Social Services, announced an investment of £1.7 million, over three years from April 2010, to develop and improve services for adults with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), their carers and their families.

This funding will be used to develop services that will help adults with ASD to reach their potential. The services will involve many organisations including the NHS and local authorities, and will address assessment and diagnosis, access to services, community support, employment and housing. More on this emerging work in Wales will be contained in the newsletter No 2

Other ASD Projects sponsored by WAG commencing in 2010

Children's Assessment and Diagnosis

The Welsh Assembly Government has funded the Wales Autism Research Centre and Bangor University to look at the way in which children and young people are assessed for Autistic Spectrum Disorders across Wales. Colleagues from WARC and Bangor University will be contacting professionals from all services in Wales to find out how assessments are undertaken across the country.



How Far Have We Reached in the First Two Years?

A lot of progress has been made during the first two years since the autism action plan was introduced. We need to find out what impact it has had on individuals, families and services. Therefore the Welsh Assembly Government are about to commence an evaluation of the progress made during the first two years and to identify where we have made good progress where we need to strengthen delivery of the plan. We will be asking you to contribute your views so please get involved

Developing an ASD Register

In a jointly-funded project with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, a project is to be carried out across North Wales looking into the possibility of developing a database/register for ASD. This work is being undertaken by researchers from Bangor University and the Welsh Autism Research Centre in Cardiff University and results will be fed back within 18 months.

Share Your Thoughts / Comments

We welcome your thoughts, comments or ideas about this and future editions of this newsletter.
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