

Here's What You Told Us...

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Hello, my name is Ieuan Rees and I am the Special Projects Administrative Assistant with the National Autism Team based at WLGA in Cardiff.

I've been very lucky to view the work done this year by the National Autism Team from two separate perspectives, as both a team member and as an autistic person. Since joining the team in February of last year through the Engage to Change project, I have been involved in numerous engagement projects and activities that have helped to ensure that our resources are meeting the needs of the autistic community.

I attended multiple focus groups that were aimed at gathering feedback which would inform an updated version of the 'Guide For Parents And Carers Following Diagnosis'. As well as being effective platforms for parents and carers of autistic children to voice their views on the current guide, these focus groups also proved to be insightful in identifying the areas that were not being addressed.

It was valuable for myself and the team to hear the various individual experiences of all who attended and take these on board in updating the guide into a much more accessible and functional resource.

I also worked with the team in producing an online survey that was set up to garner feedback and responses to the ASDinfoWales website. This allowed an opportunity for autistic people, parents, carers and professionals to have their say and express any comments or suggestions in regards to the website.

I was then able to present what had been collected into a feedback report, which provided a clear outline of what users of the current website felt should be improved, and would go on to act as the basis of the development of the new and updated website.

Finally, I was fortunate enough to produce a film alongside the team's Research and Improvement Officer, Holly Roberts, as well as Gerraint Jones-Griffiths of All Wales People First. This acted as a digital case study which we called 'Getting To Know Gerraint' that provided an insight into his experience as an autistic person, his achievements, and his progression through working life.

While this initially presented itself as a fairly challenging project, the final result was a film that dealt with a very real and relatable story that resonated with autistic people, and acknowledged both the difficulties and the positive aspects that autism presents.

Amongst these projects that the team have engaged in this year, there have been several occasions where I've been able to pause and acknowledge, from my own personal perspective, how greatly beneficial this work will be to the wider autistic community. It's a pleasure to be a part of such a dedicated and understanding team and I'm very excited to continue this work going forward.