

When a child or young person receives a new diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder

Information for School staff

Diagnosis is made through a multi-agency assessment process which takes account of early developmental history; contextual assessment and presentation in different contexts; associated language or learning difficulty and direct assessment and observation of the child or young person.

When a child or young person in your school receives a new diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), health professionals commonly ask permission to share the clinic report and diagnosis with the school staff. The decision to consent to sharing lies with the young person and/or family.

At the clinic appointment families usually receive information, which might include:

- Confirmation of the diagnosis and a verbal explanation of why this decision was reached
- An opportunity to ask questions but this is often after a long appointment and it's a lot to take in. They often need further opportunities to ask questions.
- The SIGN information booklet for parents and carers
<http://sign.ac.uk/patients/publications/145/index.html> (NB Translations are available in some languages)
- The SIGN information booklet for young people and a brief list of key supports:
 - Websites
 - Parent information sources
 - Local support organisations
 - Information about Disability Living Allowance

Following the appointment:

- They will usually receive a written report
- The school might be sent a copy if this was consented to
- The diagnostic team may make referrals to other support services on behalf of the family or may suggest discussion about further referral takes place at a child planning meeting

Recommendations:

- **Child Planning Meetings:** All families of children and young people who are undergoing assessment for ASD or who receive a diagnosis should be supported through the child planning process.
- **Individualised planning and support based on need:** Support plans should have an “autism lens” but should always be based on needs of each child and family or their individual circumstances and not dependent on diagnosis.
- **Specialist Support:** Staff with expertise in ASD. For example, from Local Education Additional Support for Learning Services providing support to schools, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and CAMHS may provide assistance in a range of ways to contribute to planning and implementing individualised specialist supports and interventions. Schools or families may make requests for assistance.

- **Post diagnostic support:**

Where possible, a **follow up meeting** can be offered to parents/ carers to meet with a health and education professional with ASD expertise to provide an opportunity for the family to:

- Ask questions arising following the diagnosis
- Find out and ask about how support is co-ordinated through the local staged intervention process
- Receive information about relevant local supports, benefits and sources of information and how to access them

Parent Education and Training:

ASD parent supports are recommended in evidence based guidelines, as a key and effective intervention. In each local area, the availability of parent groups and information sessions varies. They are commonly delivered by health and/ or education professionals or third sector staff with autism knowledge. It is important that they are age and stage appropriate. Schools can find out what is offered locally and signpost parents.

The Scottish Autism 'Right Click' programme provides an online option

Other examples of programmes which might run locally are:

- The 'More Than Words' Hanen parent programmes for children up to 5 years
- The 'Talkability' Hanen parent programmes for able children aged 4-8
- Williams and Wright 'Living with Autism' programme for parents of children in school
- 'PEERS Programme': Group sessions attended by parents in parallel with groups for able autistic teenagers who wish to develop friendship skills
- Locally developed parent information sessions

Recommended resources and information for school and nursery staff:

- The CIRCLE resources to support inclusive practice in schools and nurseries
- Local Authority CPD training opportunities
- The Autism Toolbox <http://www.autismtoolbox.co.uk/>
- Education Scotland online modules <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/inclusion-in-practice/>
- National Autism Implementation Team (NAIT) website <https://www.thirdspace.scot/nait>
- Visual Support Project training and accreditation or local resources for providing consistent visual supports in schools (see NAIT website)
- Scottish Autism <https://www.scottishautism.org/>
- The National Autistic Society <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is.aspx>
- Social Thinking <https://www.socialthinking.com/>
- Social Stories <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-it/>
- Autism Network Scotland <https://www.autismnetworkscotland.org.uk/pages/home>
- PEERS in the classroom resource for secondary schools <https://www.semel.ucla.edu/peers>
- Autism Education Trust <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/>