



## DUNDEE INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICES

# Autism Strategy Framework

### The National Strategy

The Scottish Strategy for Autism was first published by the Scottish Government in late 2011. The strategy set out a 'vision that individuals on the autism spectrum are respected, accepted and valued by their communities and have confidence in services to treat them fairly so that they are able to have meaningful and satisfying lives.'

<http://www.autismstrategyscotland.org.uk/>

The six values which underpin the strategy are: Dignity; Privacy; Choice; Safety; Realising Potential; and Equality and Diversity.

### Introduction

This framework has been developed collaboratively by the Autism Strategy Group which includes representatives from parents, schools and partners across integrated children's services, including the Voluntary Sector. The framework identifies areas of strength as well as those for change and improvement; and articulates with services for adults (Health & Social Care Partnership).

**Group 1 Goal:** Access to integrated service provision across the lifespan to address the multi-dimensional aspects of autism

**Group 2 Goal:** Access to appropriate transition planning across the lifespan

**Group 3 Goal:** Consistent adoption of good practice guidance in key areas of education, health and social care across all local authority areas

**Group 4 Goal:** Capacity and awareness building in mainstream services to ensure people with autism are met with staff who recognise and have an understanding of autism

## **1.0 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

**1.1** Dundee's integrated children's services work within a framework of national and local policies which includes the Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act (2014); the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act (2004, amended 2009); and the Equalities Act (2010). This framework allows services to respond to the specific needs of children and young people with social communication difficulties, including autism within a wider framework of Complex and Additional Support Needs.

The Strategic Planning Group (SPG) for Complex and Additional Support Needs (ASN) has been in place since August 2013 and integrates strategic planning for children, young people and their families for whom they provide a service. The group consists of key service and agency representatives who have a role in management or planning for this client group, and who have links to operational groups across the city.

Our Supporting Learners Policy Framework 2017 (<http://www.dundee.gov.uk/publication/supporting-learners-policy-framework>) provides a context for how we support all learners including those with Autism and social/communication needs.

Our transition planning groups and the ASN Census has identified that identification and assessment of social and communication needs has increased steadily over the last 6 years. The data tells us that there are children and young people who need support to address these concerns and therefore need to continue to build capacity in our workforce across the city.

**1.2** Children and young people who experience difficulties with social communication, including autism and pupils with a dual diagnosis require careful planning and consideration in educational settings. Many children may not have a diagnosis but nevertheless present with similar patterns of behaviour requiring consideration and review.

**1.3** These children and young people may also share features of their learning style with others. These include:

- Differences in focus, attention and concentration
- Self-regulation and managing impulsivity
- Motor skills and coordination difficulties
- Literacy and/or numeracy – barriers to learning
- Specific language needs
- Sensory needs

**1.4** The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014 requires that children and young people with additional support and Wellbeing needs are identified and supported. Dundee City Council responds to these Acts by ensuring:

- early identification and planning within the Team Around The Child framework
- partnership with parents
- effective transitions
- developing a range of provision - mainstream with enhanced support and special school
- multi-disciplinary and collaborative work with partner agencies
- staff training and organisational development

This should achieve the following:

- to support people through the transition from child to adult life and in other transitions throughout education
- to provide support to lead to skills for work and employment opportunities;
- to provide appropriate training and education;
- to address the needs of all people with autism, and carers, through a local partnership approach;
- consultation to provide evidence on what is working for people with autism and their families;
- to develop a range of services in conjunction with relevant partners and to build capacity of autism services and support;
- to create specific recreation and leisure supports for people with autism.

## **2.0 EARLY IDENTIFICATION**

**2.1** Early identification is essential so that assessment of the child's needs, planning of learning and educational provision and parental support can be facilitated.

**2.2** Assessment and planning of educational and wellbeing needs should take place within Dundee integrated children's services Team Around The Child (TATC) framework. The role of the Named Person should be central to the identification of any wellbeing needs and sharing of information relevant to assessment of social and communication needs including Autism. This is achieved by using a staged approach and using the ABLe framework ([www.ableschools.org.uk](http://www.ableschools.org.uk)) to adapt the learning environment and meet the needs of the child or young person.

**2.3** In Dundee, diagnosis of Autism is the responsibility of Health agencies (Child Health Clinic at Armistead Child Development Centre and CAMHS), in collaboration with parents, carers and should include assessment information from the Named Person and other relevant staff in the Children and Families Service as well as other agencies.

## **3.0 PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS/CARERS**

**3.1** Partnerships with parents should ensure:

- open communication, provision of information and consultation with parents
- shared assessment of the child or young person's needs
- involvement of parents in planning the child's programme of support
- working closely with parent support groups
- providing parent focus groups to obtain parents' views

**3.2** Informing parents:

- information is available for parents through this Policy Statement and Supporting Learners in Dundee Policy Framework (2017)
- information, in leaflet form, is available to inform and support parents at times of their child's transition from one sector to another <https://www.dundee.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/FAQs ASN Leaflet Sept14.pdf>

- information and associated links can be accessed through the Dundee City Council website
- Pathways training for parents -NHS/Inclusion Service
- Parents training on request provided by staff from The Inclusion Service
- Signposting for parents to other resources to support knowledge and understanding of autism by Inclusion Service

### **3.3 Partnership with children and young people:**

- To ensure children and young people's views are heard and acted upon appropriately
- Developing a range of communication methods to allow children and young people to have a voice
- Inception of Dundee Young Ambassadors for Inclusion

## **4.0 INFORMATION ACCESS AND SIGNPOSTING**

**4.1** The Dundee Virtual Network was launched on 2nd April 2015 in conjunction with Autism Network Scotland. This gives people in and around Dundee an opportunity to share information, ideas and solutions online in relation to autism matters.

**4.2** Dundee Autism Support Hub – DASH has been established as a charity and will provide a one stop shop for parents and carers to provide information and signposting. It also hope to provide training for parents, support, and social groups for children and young people. <https://www.dundeeautismsupporthub.co.uk/>

**4.3** There are also two other parents support groups (National Autistic Society and Autism Support Angus and Dundee) who provide information and support for parents and social groups for children and young people and who work at providing more social opportunities for children and young people with autism.

**4.4** The Scottish Family Information Service in Scotland website provides a comprehensive list of support for children and families of local support and facilities for people with autism. <http://www.scottishfamilies.gov.uk/>

**4.5** The Autism Improvement Officer from Autism Network Scotland is available for information and signposting and support, and works closely with the Education Support Officer (ASN) in the council's Children & Families Service.

## **5.0 DEVELOPING A RANGE OF PROVISION**

**5.1** Dundee City Council Children & Families Service aims to meet the needs of children and young people with social communication difficulties, including autism, through a developing range of provision from nursery and mainstream school to special school, according to individual needs.

**5.2** Schools are developing a range of different ways to meet the needs of children and young people with autism, including Enhanced Support Areas, sensory rooms and quiet areas. The DCC Education Plan, and delivery plan for Complex & ASN both include the priority outcome and action which ensures that all nurseries and schools can meet diverse learning and communication needs.

- 5.3 Dundee City Council Children & Families Service are developing an 'Autism Friendly Nursery /School Audit' tool which will be used to ensure every nursery/school will meet the requirements of the tool and therefore support children and young people in our schools and nurseries
- 5.4 The ABLe framework provides staff with a bank of evidence-based strategies and resources to support children and young people with social communication needs, including autism. [www.ableschools.org.uk](http://www.ableschools.org.uk)
- 5.5 The Seemis data-base provides a basis for monitoring the percentage of children and young people with Autism and social/communication needs across communities in Dundee. The purpose of the data is to inform improvement planning and ensure that a coherent strategy to meet the range of needs continues to be implemented.

## **6.0 PLANNING FOR TRANSITION**

- 6.1 Transition is the term used to describe the process of a child moving from one sector of education to another i.e. nursery to primary, primary to secondary and secondary to post school provision. We aim to ensure effective transition for all children and especially for young people who have additional support needs.
- 6.2 The most usual route for children and young people will be to enter their local nursery, primary, or secondary school and either employment or further education on leaving school. Good links between stages should ensure a smooth change for most children and young people and for their families. Some children and young people may have significant additional support needs that require assessment over time by one or more professional agencies in order to identify levels and types of support. For these children and young people, the transition will need a higher level of planning and preparation.
- 6.3 The principles of identifying the key team around the child apply in all situations. It is the responsibility of the current and receiving placements to identify the team around the child and arrange a process of information sharing, transition planning and review.
- 6.4 For transition from nursery to primary and primary to secondary, Supporting Learners Management Groups (SLMG) are responsible for managing the placement of children with recognised additional support needs. These groups consist of a representative of Dundee Educational Psychology Service, Head Teachers, Speech and Language Therapist and other Allied Health Professionals where appropriate, Support for Learning teachers and any other professional who can inform the process.
- 6.5 Each nursery/school provide opportunities for enhanced transition for children and young people who require a higher level of support, these are supported by materials which have been produced to help support nurseries and schools.

## **Post 16 Transition**

- 6.6** Post school transition is coordinated by the young person's Named Person and follows procedures which are outlined in 'Transition Guidance for Young People with Additional Support Needs'.

Transitional support and consequent outcomes will be achieved for young people by maximising appropriate alignment of provision and services with individual need.

## **7.0 STAFF/ TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

- 7.1** Dundee City Council, in close collaboration with key partners in NHS Tayside and Voluntary Sector, will continue to support staff and parents through:

- staff training provided after school, during development time and during in-service days
- school based training which would be planned through Nurturing Approaches Framework add link
- signposting for staff and parents to other resources to support knowledge and understanding of autism
- e learning autism awareness training which is mandatory for all council employees ( see 7.4)

### **7.2 Senior Learning and Care Practitioner (SLCP) and Learning and Care Assistants (LCA)**

A programme of training has been developed for SLCP to develop their knowledge and skills, they will then go on to provide training, coaching and mentoring for LCA and other member of support staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of autism.

### **7.3 E- learning**

A framework for learning and workforce development is planned, taking into account the learning needs of a range of people who support children and adults with autism. An e-learning programme is being made available for all staff as part of this and is being developed with specialist Speech and Language input .

- 7.4** In partnership with the University of Dundee, a Masters Level Inclusive Practice programme has been jointly designed and delivered with Education staff with a module which focuses on Autism.

- 7.5** Kingspark School is accredited by the National Autistic Society and received its re-accreditation in April. The school met all of the standards and exceeded some of them. Promoted staff in the school contribute to staff development programmes for others in the city. The core standards have been used to developed the Autism Friendly Audit tool (See 5.3)

## **8.0 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

**8.1** Quality improvement planning for Autism is monitored through the Autism Strategy Group's action plan (Appendix 1). This includes other relevant quality improvement frameworks such as How Good Is Our School 4; Complex & ASN Strategy Group.

**8.2** We are securing improvement as follows:  
Providing leadership and direction in order to provide the best possible outcomes for children and young people with complex and ASN in Dundee. There is a strong collective ownership of our agreed vision.

Our key performance outcomes are informed by :-

- The national Strategic Commissioning for Services for Children with Complex Additional Support Needs (the Doran Review).
- Undertaking initial mapping of services to inform future commissioning and, given overlap of several services across different SPG's, ensuring that there is a coherent approach to commissioning.
- Directing resources towards integrated and effective approaches that promote prevention and early intervention in addition to specialist interventions. Service level agreements exist between education and allied health professionals, and between social work and various third sector providers, that prioritise early intervention.
- National and local data sets (attainment/ attendance/post-school destinations/wellbeing) in relation to trends for targeted interventions for children and young people with complex and ASN.
- Known risks/vulnerabilities for children and young people in need of protection and those looked after by the local authority.
- Staff development surveys
- Participation in the city-wide Team Around the Child (TATC) learning events with a focus on the joint assessment of wellbeing.
- Consultation with parents/carers/stakeholders to improve a shared understanding of how the GIRFEC principles can be fulfilled through integrated delivery of services.
- Ensuring key processes (assessment, planning and participation) are informed by the TATC framework; encouraging and monitoring participation in the TATC process, including the child's plan.

**October 2017**

**Date for Review : October 2019**

**Draft Dundee Autism Strategy for Children & Families  
Action Plan  
2014 – 2024**

Local Area	Priority	National Strategic Outcome	Intention/Actions	Work streams	2015	2017	2024	Outcome
1. Improving knowledge and understanding of Autism	2		Update the Dundee Menu of Interventions on the Autism Network Scotland website and make available when requested, in hard copy.	Choice and Control	*			Achieved & ongoing
	1, 2, 3, 4		Children, young people and adults with Autism, and their families will inform strategic plans in relation to Autism, through effective engagement: Partners Forum (Adults); and Every Child Matters sub-group	A Healthy Life Choice and Control Independence Active Citizenship	*			Achieved & Ongoing
	2		Autism training and resources to support pupils will be provided to all Dundee nurseries/schools. Parents will be informed of training provided.	Choice and Control	*			Achieved & Ongoing
	2		Training to be provided to school/post school transport providers who are transporting children/young people with Autism.	Choice and Control	*			Achieved and Ongoing
	2		An e-learning tool will be developed for staff within each agency that emphasises the importance of sensory and environmental factors. To be circulated and made available via *****	Choice and Control		*		<b>Achieved</b>
	2		Awareness raising within the general public using community events in different localities and liaising with national organisations.	Choice and Control		*		
	2		Training in Autism to be promoted with ASN staff. Dundee University's MEd module in Autism made available each year to selected school staff.	Choice and Control		*		<b>Achieved and ongoing</b>



	2	An appropriate range of Autism training for staff at all levels to be identified. IN PROGRESS WITH SHCP (Gillian P-W?)	Choice and Control				
	2	Children and young people on the Autism Spectrum will have access to an autism-friendly school environment. Accreditation framework to be developed and implemented in consultation with Kingspark and NAS.					
2. Pathways for and beyond diagnosis	1	The pathway to diagnosis and post diagnosis support for children and young people to be clear, transparent and communicated effectively within localities.	A Healthy Life		*		
	1	The New Pathways Programme to be tailored to the needs of each group of families and the age range of the children. The programme to be continually adapted based on formal evaluation and informal feedback.	A Healthy Life	*			
	1	Those with Autism and their parents/carers to be informed of local support organisations	A Healthy Life				
	2	Self Directed Support (SDS) to be effectively implemented to ensure greater choice and control over support arrangements for families and individuals, on an on-going basis and at times of crisis.	Choice and Control	*			
	2	Social opportunities and activities for children, young people and adults with Autism to be further developed, where possible in the local community.	Choice and Control		*		
	2	Support groups to be established for those with Autism and those who live and care for children for children and adults with Autism.	Choice and Control	*			

3. Improved information sharing between agencies	2	A database of the number of children and young people with Autism receiving support in Dundee will be established, based upon information currently held in Seemis (Education) and Mosaic (Children & Families Service)	Choice and Control		*		
	1	Improved co-ordination, communication and information sharing between core services such as health and education.	A Healthy Life	*			
	1	Transition Referral panel which will improve post16 transition process through co-ordination, communication and information sharing across core services for adults and children.	A Healthy Life				
4. Planning for transitions throughout life	4	Each young person with Autism will have a Named Person to explain and facilitate the transition process.	Active Citizenship	*			
	4	Principles of good transitions ( <a href="http://scottishtransitions.org.uk">scottishtransitions.org.uk</a> ) to be included in Transitions Charter, taken forward by Transitions Improvement Group.					
	4	Information regarding the transition from personnel within Children and Families Services/CAMHS into Adult Services (HSCP) to be communicated effectively with young people, parents, carers and relevant others.	Active Citizenship				
	4	The use of transition passports to be promoted when children and young people move to a different provision or change teachers. Consultation with PAMIS to be undertaken.	Active Citizenship	*			
	4	Transition Support materials to be available to all nursery/school staff on school IT Network			x		

	4	Post 16 transition multiagency referral panel implementation and development using the Principle of Good Transitions			x		
5. Improved Learning Opportunities for young people and adults	4	Information regarding suitable post school courses and links to agencies such as Skills Development Scotland to be made available to young people/adults with Autism within statutory 12 month timescale. Transition events in localities to be progressed.	Active Citizenship		*		
	4	Links to be made with local businesses and colleges and universities with a view to promoting Autism awareness and necessary supports.	Active Citizenship			*	
6. Purposeful occupational opportunities	4	Identify and engage young people, with Autism, who are not in education, training or employment through the 'Opportunities For All Partnership' and other training providers in Dundee.	Active Citizenship		*		
	4	Provide information about Autism and promote opportunities for work experience with local businesses including on-going support to ensure positive experiences.	Active Citizenship			*	

### Scottish Autism Strategy

Strategic Outcome 1 - A Healthy Life

Strategic Outcome 2 - Choice and Control

Strategic Outcome 3 – Independence

Strategic Outcome 4 - Active Citizenship