



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan

Annual Report 2018-2019

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Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan – Annual Report 2018/19

1. Summary

1.1 This second report on the delivery of the Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan 2016 responds to our commitment to provide an annual update on the progress we are making. The report discusses each of the three priority areas in the Strategic Action plan:

- Assessment and Diagnosis;
- Meeting Support Needs; and
- Awareness Raising, Information and Training.

The report also follows the structure of the Strategic Action Plan by reviewing *What We Have Done*, responding to *What We Were Told* and by setting out *What We Will do*.

1.2 The table at **Appendix one** provides a summary on progress against each action as set out in the delivery plan which accompanies the Strategic Action Plan. This report covers the period from April 2018 to March 2019.

1.3 This report should also be read in conjunction with the National Autism Team annual report, the summary is at **Appendix two**, the full report provides examples and case studies of improvements achieved.

2. Introduction

2.1 In November 2016, the Welsh Government published the new Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan¹ which was developed in response to what autistic people, their families and carers have said is important to them. The aim of the refreshed Strategic Action Plan is for:

Autistic children, young people and adults, their family and carers to have their needs understood, and to be supported to achieve their well-being outcomes.

2.2 In developing the Strategic Action Plan we worked with a wide range of stakeholders to identify key themes and priority actions which would make the greatest difference to the lives of autistic children and adults. Three priority areas were identified.

- Assessment and Diagnosis;
- Meeting Support Needs; and
- Awareness Raising, Information and Training.

2.3 We are working with our partners to deliver the ambitious commitments we have made, investing £13 million in new integrated services. We

¹ <https://gov.wales/autism-spectrum-disorder-strategic-action-plan-2016>

are making good progress but recognise it will take time to deliver on all of our plans to establish long lasting improvements. We continue to monitor and review our progress, working with delivery agencies and autistic people to make sure the investments we are making actually achieve the outcomes autistic people want to see.

- 2.4 The National Autism Team (previously the National ASD Development Team) hosted by the Welsh Local Government Association and Public Health Wales continues to support the delivery of our autism priorities. This includes the roll out of the Integrated Autism Service, and producing a wide range of resources in collaboration with stakeholders which are available on the website www.asdinfowales.co.uk. The team's valuable work is funded to at least 2022.
- 2.5 A summary of the National Autism Teams' annual report is attached **Appendix two**, it demonstrates the breadth of work the team continues to undertake. The full report will be published separately by the Welsh Local Government Association and Public Health Wales.

For example in the year 2018-19, the NAT website attracted a 62% increase in users compared to the previous year, with an average 10,575 users per month - an increase of over 3,500 users on the previous year. The team has also produced an Engagement strategy for 2019² which sets out the ways co-producing can shape and inform the role of the national team. Projects to date are a Parent-Carer film, Housing advice and the National Autism Wales Conference which was widely appreciated and supported. The team have worked on Further Education and Work Based Learning and these two schemes will be rolled out in the 2019/20 academic year. These have been co-produced with Colegiau Cymru, FE colleges, autistic learners and their parents across Wales. The Work Based learning scheme was co-produced with the National Training Federation Wales, the ASD Lead and Associated Community Training Limited (ACT).

- 2.6 Overall the key achievements in the second year of delivering the Welsh Government Strategic Action Plan and Delivery Plan are:
- The 26 week waiting time target for neurodevelopmental assessment, including ASD for children and young people is in place. Data collection commenced in November 2017 and will be available on statswales.gov.wales in due course.
 - Nationally agreed neurodevelopmental children and young people's diagnostic pathways and standards are in place and are in the process of being adopted by all health boards.

² https://www.asdinfowales.co.uk/resource/Engagement-and-Participation-Strategy-march-19_final.pdf

- The National Integrated Autism Service (IAS) has been rolled out across Wales. IAS teams are now in Cardiff and Vale, Cwm Taf, Gwent, Powys, North Wales, Western Bay and West Wales.
- The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018³ was given Royal Assent in January 2017 and will be implemented in late 2020.
- The ASD Implementation Advisory Group developed to monitor the progress and delivery of the Strategic Action Plan, continues to meet twice a year.
- The independent evaluation report of the Strategic Action Plan/ IAS⁴ was published in April 2019.
- There is continuing support for the National Autism Team hosted by the Welsh Local Government Association and Public Health Wales, to support the delivery of the Strategic Action Plan, in particular the embedding of the Integrated Autism Service. Funding is in place until at least 2022.
- The consultation on the development of a Code of Practice for Autism Services in Wales⁵ is complete and the consultation report will be published in June 2019. Work is on-going with the development of the Code.
- An extension to the independent IAS evaluation, reviewing alignment between autism and neurodevelopmental services and barriers to reducing waiting times will be published this summer.

3. What We Have Done

Assessment and Diagnostic Services

- 3.1 The Welsh Government recognises that children must have access to timely assessment and diagnostic services and in some areas waiting times have been too long. Since 2015, £2 million of additional funding has been provided each year to health boards to establish dedicated services for children and young people with neurodevelopmental conditions including autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This work has been taken forward by the Together for Children and Young People's neurodevelopmental work stream.
- 3.2 The Together for Children and Young People's Neurodevelopmental work stream comprises of clinicians, 3rd sector members and service

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2018/2/contents/enacted>

⁴ <https://gov.wales/evaluation-integrated-autism-service-and-autistic-spectrum-disorder-strategic-action-plan-final>

⁵ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2018-11/Consultation%20document.pdf>

users. The group continues to develop all Wales guidance to improve the delivery of neurodevelopment services.

- 3.3 Since the publication of the All Wales Neurodevelopment Pathway and Standards⁶, in 2016, the group has:
- Produced a national guidance framework with associated qualitative and quantitative questions;
 - Produced national guidance for second opinion / re-assessment within neurodevelopment services;
 - Provided expert advice on the creation of clinicians toolkit's for autism and a separate clinicians toolkit for ADHD; and
 - Provided advice to cross-government sector guidance providing input to a new guidance document for parents who home educate their children on how to access neurodevelopment services.
- 3.4 To monitor improvements within the service, a new 26 week waiting time standard has been put in place, measuring waiting times from referral to first appointment, which is in line with other paediatric services. It is expected that 80% of first assessment appointments will be undertaken by 26 weeks. There have been some challenges to the successful implementation due to historical waiting list systems in place. Health Boards are currently working on the quality of their data collection and reporting mechanisms in this service. The data will be published on the on the statswales⁷ website in due course.
- 3.5 For adults, the Integrated Autism Service⁸ is now available in all areas in Wales, providing assessment and diagnosis services for adults. Discussions on setting an adults waiting time standard in line with children and young people will continue. We acknowledge that implementation of a standard at this time will place extra pressure on services which are still embedding in many areas. The consultation for an autism code of practice included proposals for improvements to diagnostic services.

Meeting Support Needs – Code of Practice

- 3.6 During 2018/19 the Assembly Member led Autism (Wales) Bill highlighted the experiences of autistic people and their parents and carers in trying to access assessment and support services. Although the Welsh Government does not support autism specific legislation, a commitment was made to improve autism services through the development of a statutory code of practice under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the NHS (Wales) Act 2006 which will place duties on statutory services to ensure services are adapted to

⁶ https://www.asdinfo.wales.co.uk/resource/T4CYP_Neurodevelopment-Diagnostic-Assessment-Pathway.pdf

⁷ <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue>

⁸ <https://www.asdinfo.wales.co.uk/integrated-autism-service-2>

meet their specific needs. We have consulted on our proposals, many of which reflect the provisions in the Bill. Further information on the feedback received from our consultation is set out in section four.

Transforming additional learning needs education

- 3.7 We have introduced legislation which sets out a new system to support children and young people with additional learning needs. The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 creates a unified legal framework for Wales which will put learners, and their parents and carers at the heart of the process to identify and plan how to meet their needs. The transformed system will ensure that all learners with ALN are supported to overcome barriers to learning and can achieve their full potential. The planning and delivery of support for learners from 0 to 25 with ALN will be improved, placing learners' needs, views, wishes and feelings at the centre, focusing on the importance of identifying needs early and putting in place timely and effective interventions which are monitored and adapted to ensure they deliver the desired outcomes. The ALN Transformation programme⁹ also focuses on skills development for the education workforce, to deliver effective support to learners with ALN in the classroom, as well as easier access to specialist support, information and advice.

Employment Support

- 3.8 We acknowledge that many autistic adults can have difficulty in finding and maintaining employment. As part of our national approach to improving employment outcomes, the Welsh Government published its Employability Plan in March 2018¹⁰. This plan presented an ambitious strategy to create a highly trained and inclusive workforce, one that can respond effectively to national and regional skills needs, and adapt well to the future of work. At the centre of this ambition, we committed to helping everyone achieve their full potential through meaningful employment, regardless of their ability, health issues, background, gender or ethnicity. We are supporting people who are not working with a particular emphasis on those who are economically inactive and less likely to be in contact with mainstream employment support. We know that work is good for individuals and there is clear evidence that being in good work can promote health and well-being. We want our employability programmes to be accessible to all and are building in consideration of the impact of our programmes on those with disabilities or long-term health conditions during their design, roll out and evaluation.

⁹ <https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-transformation-programme>

¹⁰ <https://gweddiill.gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/180319-employability-plan-en.pdf>

The plan takes action in four distinct themes;

- providing an individualised approach to employment support;
- underlining the responsibility of employers to support staff;
- closing skills gaps; and
- preparing for a radically changing labour market.

Individualised support gives advisers the autonomy and flexibility to address the needs, strengths and ambitions of the person preparing for work.

- 3.9 Significant progress has been made to reduce the complexity of our existing employability delivery model for young people and adults.

'Working Wales'¹¹, the new employability advice service for Wales will be launched in May 2019. The new national service, delivered by Careers Wales, will make it easier for people to access professional careers advice, guidance and support, based on the needs and circumstances of the individual. Working Wales acts as a national entry point to employability support, which supports and complements, existing channels operating in regions, and at the heart of communities. It delivers on our commitment to deliver a more individualised approach to employability support for young people and adults, including those with protected characteristics, to make it easier to access the support they need to progress towards employment.

- 3.10 We are committed to increasing the number of disabled people in employment and are working with representative organisations to formulate a wide-range of new targeted actions. Employability support continues through Welsh Government existing programmes including ReAct¹², Job Growth Wales¹³, Access¹⁴, Traineeships¹⁵ and the Employability Skills Programme¹⁶. In addition, we are currently procuring a new employability support programme. Jobs Support Wales will be launched in April 2020, and will support people of all ages to overcome barriers to achieve and maintain good quality, sustainable employment.

- 3.11 We recognise the broader structures and culture of workplaces will have a direct impact on the employability of disabled people or those with protected characteristics and that employability cannot just be about support for individuals. We want to increase the number of employers who place emphasis on creating workplaces, which are inclusive and supportive environments for disabled people and those with long-term health conditions.

¹¹ <https://workingwales.gov.wales/>

¹² <https://gov.wales/react-individuals>

¹³ <https://www.careerswales.com/en/jobs-and-training/job-seeking/vacancy-search/what-is-jobs-growth-wales/>

¹⁴ <https://www.careerswales.com/en/skills-gateway/access-programme/>

¹⁵ <http://www.careerswales.com/en/jobs-and-training/job-seeking/i-need-experience/traineeships/>

¹⁶ <https://www.careerswales.com/en/skills-gateway/employability-skills-programme/>

- 3.12 Through the Economic Contract, we are working in partnership with employers to promote best practice behaviours, accelerating action to support recruitment, employee retention, workplace health and wellbeing, and in work training to support people to stay in work. We will challenge employers to think creatively about how they design jobs and recruit people to fill them.

Healthy Working Wales¹⁷ works with employers, health professionals and individuals to improve health and well-being at work, reduce the impact of ill health at work, and encourage early intervention to rehabilitate those who have become ill or injured. We will evaluate the programme in order to take account of changing priorities, enhancing support to Small and Medium Sized Businesses, to ensure sustainability of the programme within existing resources, to take account of future workforce trends, and to ensure continuous improvement based on the best international evidence.

- 3.13 The Equality and Inclusion Action plan 2017 – 2020¹⁸ reflects the ASD delivery plan agreeing the action: 'Welsh Government is an autism friendly employer – Engage with staff with autism to identify what specific actions could be put in place : e.g. buddy system, training for teams etc. To support this action Welsh Government has;

- Set up an informal ASD Network which is an active peer support network. There is an identified Director in Welsh Government as an informal champion / sponsor. The Director has also been reverse mentored by the ASD Network Chair. The Director has written and published a blog to all staff on her experience of being reversed mentored by an autistic colleague.
- As part of induction training for all new staff, the ASD Network is mentioned, along with all the other staff diversity networks.
- The Welsh Government Diversity Award 2019 was won by the Chair of the new Welsh Government ASD Network. Recognising the impact it's had on autistic staff members and colleagues who may have autistic family members. The Chair has also written several blogs which have helped people understand what it's like to be autistic on a day to day basis. The blogs have been shared and recognised by the wider Civil Service and Cabinet Office.
- Autism Awareness Week 2018 – The launch of the ASD Network took place and there were a number of blogs published from colleagues. As part of the week there was an Autism Awareness session where we invited a welsh Autism Blogger to come into the office and give her account of being autistic. Intranet articles

¹⁷ <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/63927>

¹⁸ <https://gov.wales/equality-and-inclusion-programme-2017-2020>

published to all staff with quotes of support from Permanent Secretary and Board Diversity Champion .Also included in the article were links to TED Talks.

- HR Panel Chair Training – Last year, all HR Panel chairs attended refresher training. Part of this training was a session on reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process. A big emphasis was placed on autism and how as an organisation we can attract, recruit and retain autistic members of staff, and what adjustments may be requested and how we can accommodate them. This includes allowing an autistic person to take notes into an interview if requested.
- Visitors Guidance: Autism friendly guidance has now been produced for anyone who maybe visiting Cathays Park for an interview or a meeting. It gives clear instruction on accessing the building, reception and going through security. This is now published on the external Welsh Government web site. <https://gov.wales/visiting-welsh-government-cathays-park>.

3.14 Welsh Government’s new Framework - ‘Action on Disability: The Right to Independent Living’¹⁹ was published for consultation on 22nd October 2018 and closed on 18th January 2019. The Framework has been in development since 2017 through engagement with disabled people and under the guidance of the Independent Living Steering Group. This group is made up of Disability stakeholders and chaired by the Chief Executive of Disability Wales²⁰, feeding in the views of their members and networks. 67 consultation responses have been received which have now been analysed. We will be strengthening some key sections of the action plan to take account of the consultation responses. We envisage that the final version of the Framework will be published in Summer 2019.

3.15 The Framework continues to be rooted in the Social Model of disability, recognising there are organisational, attitudinal and environmental barriers to equality and inclusion which must be removed to create a level playing field. The Framework is accompanied by an action plan which sets out a wide range of actions underway across Welsh Government to tackle some of the key barriers identified by disabled people themselves, including transport, employment, housing and access to buildings and places and is aligned with the delivery of the autism strategy.

3.16 The Welsh Government also supports the Big Lottery funded, Getting Ahead 2 grant²¹, which is aimed at young people aged 16-25 with a learning disability/difficulty or ASD. The programme creates and

¹⁹ <https://gov.wales/action-disability-right-independent-living>

²⁰ <http://www.disabilitywales.org/>

²¹ <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/getting-ahead2>

supports long term youth employment opportunities by engaging young people and employers. It provides young people with the intensive support required to maintain sustained and meaningful employment. Some outcomes for the first two years of the programme can be seen in the table below. Further detailed information on the programme can be found on their website www.engagetochange.org.uk.

Table 1. Statistics specific to Young People who have a diagnosis of ASD (inc as a co-morbid condition). *Getting Ahead 2 grant*

	Yrs 1-2	Y2
No of referrals	105	51
No of vocational Profiles	105	42
No on unpaid placement	47	21
No on paid placement	39	26
No of job starts	18	4
No of job sustained	16	4

Co-existing conditions

- 3.17 It is estimated that some 40% of people on the autistic spectrum have a co-existing learning disability. In June 2018 the Welsh Government published its Learning Disability Improving Lives Programme²² (LDILP). This programme of work started in 2017 with a wide ranging review looking at what a person with a learning disability, along with their families and carers, may require across the course of their lives and whether these needs were being met. As part of this review, the Improving Lives Team met over 2,000 people.

The LDILP report contains twenty-four recommendations focused on five key areas:

- Early Years;
- Housing;
- Social Care;
- Health and Well-being; and
- Education, Employment and Skills.

²² <https://gov.wales/learning-disability-improving-lives-programme>

A Ministerial Advisory Group has been set up to oversee the implementation of the programme. Its members include people with a learning disability; family carers; the third sector; local authority representatives; and health professionals.

From research and commissioned evaluations of current services we have identified the need to address co-existing neurodevelopmental conditions as part of the Code of Practice.

Health and Social Care - The National Integrated Autism Service (IAS)

- 3.18 The National Integrated Autism service²³ (IAS) is now available in each region. In addition to encouraging collaborative work across the IAS regions we have also established an adult diagnostic Community of Practice to bring together specialist practitioners across Wales to improve our approach to diagnostic services; this includes developing a national adult diagnostic assessment pathway and supporting improvement in diagnostic skills amongst clinicians.

Through the development of the IAS it has become clear that close links must be established and maintained with other agencies delivering support, particularly learning disability, mental health and social care services and with essential third sector organisations offering support. We are reinforcing these links between services through promoting collaborative working and we will develop intervention pathways to ensure that all agencies providing support for autistic people work together to develop an integrated system.

Awareness Raising, Information and Training

- 3.19 The National Autism Team continues to support autism awareness in schools. The Learning with Autism²⁴ (LwA) primary school programme launched in 2016, has seen 47 schools achieve their LwA award in 2018/19 taking the total to 127 schools across Wales. Additionally, the numbers of teaching staff, learning support staff and Autism Superheroes²⁵ accessing training has been encouraging. The Secondary schools programme was launched at the beginning of September 2017. Two schemes are planned to be rolled out in further education and work placed learning in the next academic year 2019/20. Further information can be found in Appendix two and on the Website, www.asdinfoales.co.uk which supports the delivery of the Strategic Action Plan.

They have developed and delivered specific training for a variety of agencies including WLGA, Data Cymru, Welsh Government, 3rd Sector, Children Centres, Carmarthenshire leisure centres and the

²³ <https://www.asdinfoales.co.uk/integrated-autism-service-2>

²⁴ <https://www.asdinfoales.co.uk/primary-school>

²⁵ <https://www.asdinfoales.co.uk/autism-superhero-2>

Emergency Services in Wales. They have a range of training schemes, over the last year they have been rolled out across Wales and this will continue to be a priority for 2019/20.

Data collection

- 3.20 Good quality data is essential to understand the impact of service reforms and to plan future autism services. We are working to improve autism data, this includes ensuring that autism is captured in national data sets and where needed to directly monitor the impact of new services. We have commissioned independent studies on the roll out of the integrated autism service and from April 2019 we will introduce a monitoring framework and service standards for the IAS. This data will directly inform future services. The Welsh Government has also introduced a waiting time standard for children and young people's assessment services, this data will be published in due course.
- 3.21 The Welsh Government is also committed to collecting a range of data in order to understand the impact that the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is having on people who need care and support and carers who need support. This commitment is being addressed through the development of a new Performance and Improvement Framework²⁶. This new framework is currently out for formal consultation (closing on 5 August) with the aim that the first phase of the new framework will come into force in April 2020.
- 3.22 As part of this framework the Welsh Government wants to understand the impact that the Act is having on adults and children with disabilities who are in receipt of care and support, including adults and children with Autism. In order to address this, it is proposed that the new framework includes the introduction of an Adults Receiving Care and Support Census. This will be based on the current Care and Support for Children and the Looked After Children Censuses. This will enable the collection of person level data that will provide Welsh Government, local authorities and third sector organisations with a much richer picture of both the numbers of people within the social care system in Wales as well as a more accurate understanding of their experiences of social care and the impact of these experiences on their well-being outcomes.
- 3.23 The development of this Census approach is far more complex than the original plans that were first proposed by Welsh Government. The new approach will need to be developed in partnership with local authorities and third sector colleagues who have the appropriate expertise in supporting adults and children with disabilities as well as an understanding of the specialist nature of the data that will need to be collected. It is intended that this work will commence in Autumn 2019.

²⁶ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-05/consultation-document.pdf>

- 3.24 The proposed new Performance and Improvement Framework for Local Authority Social Services will include anonymised person level data collections for all individuals receiving care and support from local authority social services from 2021. These collections will include information on whether a person receiving care and support from social services has autism as well as collecting information on other physical or learning disabilities. The new framework also encourages other ways of collecting data, with a renewed emphasis on qualitative methodologies and the use of research and evidence to collect better information to drive the understanding of need and provision at a local and national level.
- 3.25 However, there is further work we need to do on connecting the dots between the delivery of social services functions and the wider population, so whilst our framework will collect data on social services there is also the connections to the work conducted by RPBs, IAS teams, health, education and preventative services. This is far more complex, but something we will be considering in the next phase of the project.
- 3.26 Discussions have been held with GPC Wales and NWIS about establishing a register within the GP clinical system. Several issues have been identified including, the broadness of the Autism spectrum, diagnosis can only be made by a specialist, the need for clear guidance on coding, purpose of the register and actions that would be expected by the general practice. We have agreed to take to the health board Associate Medical Directors Group to identify a lead to work with policy colleagues and Autism specialists.

4. What we were told

- 4.1 Over the last year we have received a great deal of new information and stakeholder feedback on the delivery of autism services and emerging priorities for improvement. On publishing the autism strategy in 2016 we commissioned an independent evaluation of the Integrated Autism Service; an interim report was published in March 2018²⁷ which highlighted the difficulties in developing an integrated service. The final report published in April 2019²⁸ reflected the IAS was regarded as a much needed services and generally good progress was being seen in the services which were open. The review made 19 recommendations which are at **Section 6 of this report** with our initial response. The recommendations relate to improvement in communication, monitoring, funding, workforce development, collaborative working, co-existing conditions and the impact of Welsh Government policies on employment and education.

²⁷ <https://gov.wales/evaluation-integrated-autism-service-and-autistic-spectrum-disorder-strategic-action-plan-interim>

²⁸ <https://gov.wales/evaluation-integrated-autism-service-and-autistic-spectrum-disorder-strategic-action-plan>

4.2 In addition to the independent evaluation and establishing the children and young people's assessment waiting time target as mentioned earlier, we have also closely monitored the passage of the Autism (Wales) Bill. We have carefully considered the recommendations made by National Assembly for Wales's scrutiny committees and the feedback provided by many stakeholders on the merits of autism specific legislation, these are also at Section 6 of this report with our response. We have also received feedback on our proposals for an autism code of practice, the summary report will be published in June and we have commissioned further research on alignment between neurodevelopmental and autism services and a review of the barriers to reducing assessment waiting times. This review will be published late summer.

5 Autism Policy – Recommendations for service improvement

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>ASD SAP Main evaluation April 2019</p>	<p>Recommendation 1. The Welsh Government and the National Autism Team (NAT) should review the communication strategy, to provide clarity about the Integrated Autism Services (IAS) role and remit.</p>	<p>The National Autism Team work plan</p>
	<p>Recommendation 2. The Welsh Government and the NAT should identify how more information about the progress in establishing the IAS, the challenges encountered, and its performance, can be appropriately shared with (i) stakeholders involved in the development and establishment of the IAS (e.g. through the National Advisory Implementation group and the community of practice) and (ii) autistic adults, children and young people and their families, and the general public, through, for example, ASDInfoWales and local ASD steering groups.</p>	<p>The National Autism Team work plan</p>
	<p>Recommendation 3. The Welsh Government, NAT and Regional Partnership Boards (RPB) Autism Champions should continue to monitor the continuing development and performance of the first five IASs (Cardiff and Vale, Cwm Taf, Gwent, Powys and North Wales) and the establishment of the two remaining services (Western Bay and West Wales).</p>	<p>The National Autism Team work plan</p>
	<p>Recommendation 4. The Welsh Government, NAT and RPBs should review the adequacy of overall funding for the IAS, given the demand for assessment and diagnosis,</p>	<p>The pilot phase of the IAS will be completed by March 2021. Arrangements for future funding of the service will commence early in</p>

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
	support and collaborative work with other services.	2020, to ensure continuity of future services beyond 2021
	<p>Recommendation 5. The NAT should ensure that monitoring consistency through compliance with the IAS's national standards is complemented by a benchmarking of outcomes across IASs. This should be done intelligently and the reasons for differences in outcomes explored; for example, differences in resources and context are likely to impact upon outcomes. Improvements in the measurement and reporting of outcomes using Outcome Stars will be crucial to enable this.</p>	<p>The NAT is working with the IAS and has agreed a national monitoring framework. The pilot data collection will commence in May 2019. Collaborative working will be undertaken with NWIS to plan compatibility with the WCCIS system.</p>
	<p>Recommendation 6. The Welsh Government and NAT should review the apportionment of funding to each IAS in the light of the evidence of the demand for each service.</p>	<p>The pilot phase of the IAS will be completed by March 2021. Arrangements for future funding of the service will commence early in 2020, to ensure continuity of future services beyond 2021</p>
	<p>Recommendation 7. Each IAS should periodically review its work with other services to ensure that a strategic approach is taken, and that engagement with different services is prioritised (e.g. which services are engaged with as a priority) and planned. Opportunities to involve autistic adults and also family members in this review should be taken.</p>	<p>The National Autism Team work plan</p>
	<p>Recommendation 8. The Welsh Government, NAT and RPB Autism Champions should examine how the interface between the IAS and other services develops, including, in particular, its impact upon access to mental health services</p>	<p>The National Autism Team work plan. This will also be considered by the WG autism policy team as part of the development of the autism code of practice and policy</p>

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
	and social care and upon outcomes for autistic adults and parents and carers	development in 2019/20
	Recommendation 9. As outlined in the draft Autism Code of Practice, “Local Health Boards (LHB) must ensure healthcare professionals have the knowledge and training in autism they need to undertake their roles”. As part of this, LHBs should review assessment and diagnosis practice in adult mental health and learning disability services and, where needed, invest in workforce development to address confidence and skill gaps.	This will be considered by the WG autism policy team as part of the development of the autism code of practice and policy development in 2019/20
	Recommendation 10. IASs should continue to monitor the profile of autistic adults accessing the service in order to assess how well suited the IASs’ support offer is to the needs of different groups, such as autistic adults, those with mental health difficulties and those with sensory needs. This should be informed by analysis of data on outcomes.	The National Autism Team work plan. This will also be considered by the WG autism policy team as part of the development of the autism code of practice and policy development in 2019/20
	Recommendation 11. IASs should assess the capacity of the service to respond to changes in people’s circumstances and needs; for example, this could include monitoring the numbers of autistic adults who receive a short term, outcome focused intervention, and who subsequently re-engage with the IAS at a later point, when their circumstances or needs change.	The National Autism Team work plan. This will also be considered by the WG autism policy team as part of the development of the autism code of practice and policy development in 2019/20
	Recommendation 12. The NAT and IASs should continue to monitor and evaluate the extent to which the interventions and support they offer for adults and parents and carers meets their needs. Where gaps in support are	The National Autism Team work plan. This will also be considered by the WG autism policy team as part of the development of the autism code of practice and policy

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
	identified, consideration should be given to whether IASs should develop their offer and/or work with others services to meet the need.	development in 2019/20
	Recommendation 13. The NAT should work with IASs, RPBs, voluntary sector and service users, to consider the scope and ambition of the IAS; for example, should the IAS (i) focus its work upon a small number of services such as mental health, learning disability and social care services, or (ii) should it seek to take on a more ambitious agenda, to also work systematically with other services such as leisure, employment and housing services? This should consider both which organisation/s are best placed to deliver this, and their capacity to do so.	The National Autism Team work plan
	Recommendation 14. The Welsh Government and NAT should work with other stakeholders to explore where responsibility for regional and local Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) policy development should lie.	The National Autism Team work plan. This will be considered by the WG autism policy team as part of the development of the autism code of practice and policy development in 2019/20
	Recommendation 15. As the IAS becomes firmly established, the Welsh Government, NAT, RPBs, PSBs and Local ASD Leads should work with autistic adults and their families, and the voluntary sector, to identify the next priorities for action; for example, support in education, for transitions and employment appear to be key unmet needs, but is too early to judge if actions in the refreshed autism strategy are sufficient to address this.	This will be considered by the WG autism policy team as part of the development of the autism code of practice and policy development in 2019/20
	Recommendation 16. The Welsh Government should	This will be considered by the WG autism

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
	<p>ensure that the impact of the new Autism Code of Practice is evaluated and that, for example, the impact upon access to social care is considered.</p>	<p>policy team as part of the development of the autism code of practice and policy development in 2019/20</p>
	<p>Recommendation 17. As far as possible, future evaluations of other key elements of the autism strategy, such as the Employability Programme and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation Programme, should be required to identify and report on their impact upon autistic people.</p>	<p>This will be considered by the WG autism policy team as part of the development of the autism code of practice and policy development in 2019/20</p>
	<p>Recommendation 18. LHBs and Local Authorities (LAs) hosting IASs should monitor staffing and the impact of decisions about terms, conditions and pay upon services' budgets and their ability to recruit and retain staff.</p>	<p>The National Autism Team work plan. This will also be considered by the WG autism policy team as part of the development of the autism code of practice and policy development in 2019/20</p>
	<p>Recommendation 19. IAS should work with the NAT and RPBs to ensure the evidence needed to inform decisions about the long term funding is available.</p>	<p>The National Autism Team work plan. This will also be considered by the WG autism policy team as part of the development of the autism code of practice and policy development in 2019/20</p>
	<p>Recommendation 20 The WG should make its expectations about long term funding of the IAS clear; for example whether the expectation is that if the model is proved cost effective, it will continue to be funded through the ICF, or if, for example, LHBs and LA's will be expected to fund the service after March 2021.</p>	<p>This will be considered by the WG autism policy team as part of the development of the autism code of practice and policy development in 2019/20</p>

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>NAW, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee. Autism (Wales) Bill Stage One Report.</p>	<p>Recommendation 1. We recommend that the Welsh Government directs the IAS to improve the consistency of the services across the regions, to ensure a national approach, and reports back to the Committee within six months. We also recommend that they produce clear public information to clarify what people can expect from the IAS.</p>	<p>Extract from Written Response from the Minister for Health and Social Services to Health and Social Care and Sport Committee. Agreed.</p> <p>The IAS is supported by the NAT, hosted by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and PHW. The Team facilitates a Heads of IAS group to promote collaborative working. Recent work has included reviewing and updating the specification for the service, and to agree outcome focussed service wide monitoring arrangements. I expect the revised national specification and monitoring arrangements to be available by April. Information on the IAS and autism resources is freely available on the ASDinfoales website.</p> <p>Each regional service will also produce their own communications materials.</p> <p>The IAS has been designed to bridge an identified gap in services rather than replace existing support. The IAS will sometimes refer individuals to other mainstream services which are better placed to provide specialised support.</p> <p>We are working to build autism knowledge and skills across public sector services through the resources and training being delivered by the National Autism Team and locally by the IAS teams. Examples of these resources can be found on the ASDinfoales</p>

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
		<p>website.</p> <p>As each IAS has overlaid existing autism services in their regions, there will be some differences in how local services are delivered, to take account of variances such the professional mix of staff, local geography and the services most in demand in any area. We aim to publish findings from the independent evaluation of the implementation of the service by the end of February, and we will carefully consider recommendations made there alongside those made by the scrutiny committees. We will set out further plans for evaluation and monitoring of our reforms as part of the annual report on the delivery of the ASD strategy in June 2019.</p>
	<p>Recommendation 2. We recommend that the Welsh Government increases the provision of direct ASD support services across Wales (beyond the services currently offered by the IAS), and ensures vital third sector services receive sustainable funding to continue and expand their specialist support services, which are providing direct frontline support and plugging the gaps which the IAS cannot deliver.</p>	<p>Agreed The IAS is an additional service designed to increase capacity, local authorities and health boards should also have existing autism services which work alongside the IAS. From 2015/16 the Welsh Government placed the autism infrastructure grant of £40k per local authority in the Revenue Support Grant. This funding is available for LAs to support autism services which could include securing third sector support. Also the Welsh Government Sustainable Social Services third sector grants scheme is specifically designed to</p>

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
		<p>provide national voluntary sector groups with funding to deliver community support services. The next grant will be available from April 2020 and we encourage voluntary sector groups including those which provide specialist support services for autistic people to apply for funding through the competitive grant application process which will be advertised later in 2019</p>
	<p>Recommendation 3. We recommend the Welsh Government takes urgent action to address the clear need for employment support for adults with ASD. There must be a clear pathway for adults to be able to access support to assist them into employment. Careers Wales should play a greater role but there is also a case for providing additional funding to third sector agencies to deliver specialised employment support services.</p>	<p>The NAT and local autism leads have strong working relationships with the Department of Work and Pensions to assist their staff in supporting autistic people who are in receipt of out of work benefits, which are non-devolved.</p> <p>Our Working with Autism programme delivered through the ASD NAT is supporting Careers Wales and Job Centres to provide advice and support for individuals with autism seeking employment support. By the end of 2018, over 30,000 individuals have completed our ASD aware scheme (8,006 completed during 2018) and 1,210 have completed Working with Autism scheme. A further 263 have completed the Positive about Working with Autism HR scheme. The Autism Aware scheme is also now being rolled out to Welsh Government staff.</p> <p>The Welsh Government is also working in partnership with the Big Lottery – Getting</p>

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
		<p>Ahead Two project which is a five year programme designed to support young people who have learning disabilities or autism into the workplace. This project is delivered by a third sector consortium and is in its third year. Up to November 2018, 200 autistic young people have been referred into the service, 170 have received a vocational profile, 160 have undertaken placements and 33 autistic young people are now in sustained employment.</p> <p>Also in 2018, we published a cross-Government employability plan that set out our vision for making Wales a full-employment, high-tech, high-wage economy. At the centre of this ambition, we are committed to helping everyone achieve their full potential through meaningful employment, regardless of their ability, health issues, background, gender or ethnicity. We are supporting people who are not working with a particular emphasis on those who are economically inactive and less likely to be in contact with mainstream employment support. This will include supporting autistic people and we will investigate where more can be done to provide them with the tailored support they need.</p> <p>The Employability Plan takes action in four distinct themes; providing an individualised</p>

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
		<p>approach to employment support, underlining the responsibility of employers to support staff, closing skills gaps and preparing for a radically changing labour market.</p> <p>Individualised support gives advisers the autonomy and flexibility to address the needs, strengths and ambitions of the person preparing for work.</p>
	<p>Recommendation 4. We recommend that the Welsh Government amends the Codes of Practice for Parts 3 (assessing the needs of individuals) and 4 (meeting the needs) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to include specific provisions on ASD.</p>	<p>Agreed. The Welsh Government has published a consultation on our proposals for a Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Service (30th November until 1 March 2019.) This Code will be made under both the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the NHS (Wales) Act 2006.</p> <p>The purpose of the Code will be to ensure that both statutory services and autistic people understand their rights and responsibilities under existing needs based legislation and codes of practice. The Code will seek to ensure services are adapted to meet the specific needs of autistic people.</p>
	<p>Recommendation 5. We recommend that the Welsh Government instructs Health Boards and LAs to ensure there are multiple, appropriate, clear referral pathways available to all, including a specific primary care pathway, and that existing barriers between the health, care and education sectors are removed, for example to enable GPs</p>	<p>Agreed. Through the work of the T4CYP, neurodevelopmental workstream, there are now nationally agreed pathways to access children's assessment services. The IAS is also developing national pathways for adult services as part of service improvement.</p>

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
	to refer children for education support.	The consultation on the Code of Practice for the Delivery of Autism Services makes specific reference duties in relation to the provision of care and support pathways, this includes diagnostic pathways for assessment and diagnosis, to be aligned with social care pathways. There are also plans to require primary care pathways, particularly for GPs and to ensure there are appropriate pathways for autistic people with other co-existing conditions to access support which is appropriate for their needs.
	Recommendation 6. We recommend that it should be mandatory for all school staff (particularly teachers and teaching assistants) to receive training in awareness and understanding of ASD, during their initial teacher training and as part of their continuing professional development.	Agreed. We are currently reforming the way in which initial teacher education (ITE) is delivered in Wales. The ITE reforms require accredited ITE partnerships to design and deliver courses that support the four purposes of the new curriculum for Wales and address the six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) in order to develop future teachers to meet the needs of all learners, including learners with ASD. Furthermore a key element of our overall reform agenda has been to introduce a new more rigorous approach to the accreditation of programmes of ITE, and that these should be governed by the EWC so enabling the profession to set its own entry requirements. These new programmes will be available from

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
		<p>September 2019.</p> <p>New ITE Partnerships will develop approaches to assist aspiring teachers to understand the importance of research informed practice, so that teachers are taught the importance of keeping up to date with research, such as research on ASD, to inform their teaching practice on an ongoing basis throughout their working lives. In addition all teachers in Wales are required to understand and be aware of the wellbeing, personal, emotional and social development of all learners.</p> <p>The consultation on the Code of Practice for the Delivery of Autism Services includes a section dedicated to improving staff knowledge and skills. Statutory bodies will be expected to undertake autism training needs analysis for their staff, tailored to their professional needs. In relation to schools the National Autism Team have developed the Learning with Autism (LwA) programme aimed at increasing knowledge across teaching staff and learners, there are now packages available for early years, primary schools, secondary schools and further education. Applications for the LwA awards are being received on a daily basis. Our success so far is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Schools launched in March 2016: Almost 4500 teaching staff has completed

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
		<p>the scheme, and almost 5,000 LSA's. We now have over 26,500 autism superheroes, 11,640 this year alone. There have been 111 schools awarded LwA whole school award certificate (more than 40 schools across Wales during 2018).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years: almost 1000 members of staff completed the scheme. 40 settings have been awarded their certificate. (35 more since January) • Secondary Schools: more than 2000 teachers have completed the scheme and there have been 9161 pupils signed the pupil pledge (which is over 8,700 pupils undertaken the pledge since January 2018). 8 schools applied and successfully received their awards.
	<p>Recommendation 7. We recommend that the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 ('the ALNET Act') is closely monitored to assess whether it meets the needs of children and young people with ASD considered "high functioning" and who do not have a co-occurring learning disability.</p>	<p>Agreed. Under the ALNET, all children and young who are identified as having an additional learning need (ALN), which might include those with ASD considered high functioning, will be entitled to an individual development plan and associated rights and protections under that Act.</p> <p>The Welsh Government is committed to undertaking a post-implementation review of the ALNET Act five years after its commencement. This will assess the extent</p>

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
	<p>Recommendation 9. We recommend that the Welsh Government's Code of Practice makes provision to ensure that individuals can access appropriate information and support in their language of choice.</p>	<p>to which the ALNET Act has had a positive impact on children and young people with ALN in Wales.</p> <p>Agreed. The consultation on the Code of Practice makes specific reference to the availability of services meet Welsh Language Standards and where required provide reasonable adjustments to ensure that autistic people with protected characteristics have equal access to services and support. We have also published an Easy Read version of the consultation on the proposals for the Code.</p>
<p>NAW, Finance Committee. Autism (Wales) Bill Stage One Report.</p>	<p>Recommendation 1. In future, should the Assembly vote in favour of the motion tabled in accordance with Standing Order 26:91 the Committee recommends that the Welsh Government commits to providing information to ensure that costs in an explanatory memorandum are as comprehensive and detailed as possible utilising cost information which the Welsh Government has available.</p>	<p>A letter from the First Minister, responding directly to the Committee's concerns was issued on 21 December 2018. The Welsh Government will provide information held by us, but we would not undertake any additional data gathering or bespoke data analysis etc., as this is the responsibility of the Member in Charge.</p>
<p>Report on consultation on proposals for autism code of practice</p>	<p>A clear explanation is needed on how an autism code aligns with a needs based approach to services, as advocated in legislation such as the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.</p>	

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
	<p>The code should be carefully balanced between assessment, diagnosis and the provision of direct support services.</p>	<p>These recommendations will be considered by the WG autism policy team as part of the development of the autism code of practice and policy development in 2019/20</p>
<p>There should be more detail on pathways for assessment and support, including those for people with co-existing conditions, including and beyond mental health and learning disabilities.</p>		
<p>There should be better access to information on how to access support. This should be available across services, including primary and secondary care, and on support during transition.</p>		
<p>A clear explanation should be provided on how the powers in the code would be exercised to ensure compliance by public bodies.</p>		
<p>More information should be included on the role of the autism champion in Regional Partnership Boards.</p>		
<p>The code needs to have a clear written style and full glossary.</p>		
<p>More information should be included on how the duties around workforce training will be delivered in order to improve knowledge and skills in different parts of the workforce.</p>		

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY
	<p>There were significant concerns that a code would place substantial additional pressures on already stretched services, and questions as to how this would be acknowledged and addressed.</p>	
	<p>The approach to collaborative working was welcomed, with agreement that autistic people need to be at the centre of service design and delivery.</p>	
	<p>More clarity is needed on how the code links to education and Additional Learning Needs reform.</p>	
	<p>There needs to be more recognition and links to the importance of third sector involvement in the delivery of services.</p>	
	<p>More detail on the data collected to monitor service delivery.</p>	

6 What we will do

Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services

- 6.1 In the second year of delivering the Strategic Action Plan we have made significant progress, building on the solid foundation established in our first year. Our focus continues to be on delivering on the investment we have made to improve autism services so they are sustainable and can meet needs of autistic people in the long term.

The main focus for 2019-20 will be to work with our partners to deliver our commitment for a statutory code of practice on the delivery of autism services. In this way we will re-inforce responsibilities to ensure services are adapted to meet the needs of autistic people and their parents and carers. Acting on the feedback on our proposals for the code, we have listened to calls for greater certainty about what services autistic people can access under existing legislation and through the reforms we are now putting in place. We are also listening to professionals concerned about how growing demand for services can be met by the limited capacity of existing services.

- 6.2 All of the feedback we have received will be taken into account in the development of the draft code of practice and will inform future autism policy development alongside the introduction of the code. During the summer and autumn we are organising technical groups to develop our plans for the code. Also in November we will be holding stakeholder events to discuss our updated proposals. We aim to publish the draft code for consultation by the end of 2019. At that time we will hold further consultation events to ensure that the code delivers on its intentions. We will also consider what further action is required which will support the future implementation

- 6.3 We will also continue to deliver our other priorities in the Strategic Action Plan, supported by the National Autism Team. The high level priorities in the National Autism Team's work plan for 2019/20 will include:

- Increasing use of existing training materials and resources.
- Training including development of new resources.
- Supporting further development and embedding of Integrated Autism Services.
- Facilitating networks, to promote collaboration and shared learning.
- Working with partners and stakeholders, including Welsh Government.

- 6.4 The team will also continue to focus on developing a workable data collection approach to measure the impact of autism services, more specifically in adult services. We have introduced a pilot data collection system into the IAS from April 2019, which is outcome focussed.

ASD Strategic Action Plan - Delivery Plan

- 6.5 The Strategic Action Plan is not a static document; we have provided an update in relation to each of the commitments made in the Delivery Plan which were achieved during the year at **Appendix One**. As we develop the code of practice we will consider the need to introduce new commitments into the delivery plan to continue the improvements we want to see. We continue to work with the ASD Implementation Advisory Group to consider what more we can do to improve the lives of autistic people to enable to delivery of the code of practice. Alongside this we are working across government to ensure the policy development is aligned with other departments and to encourage joint working, for example ensuring alignment with additional learning needs reforms.

Appendix One: ASD Delivery Plan Update

Assessment and Diagnosis		
What we want to achieve	What will we do	Progress
Autistic children, young people and adults will have access to timely referral, assessment and post diagnostic services which meet their needs.	Deliver improvements to children’s assessment and diagnostic services. This will include the implementation of the national standardised diagnostic assessment pathway to ensure consistency.	All health boards are aware and using the pathway to guide their services.
	Improve timeliness of access, for children and young people, a new 26 week time target from referral to first assessment appointment	Wait times will be published on Statswales in due course
	Ensure ongoing monitoring of progress and timeliness of assessment and diagnosis. This will be incorporated within the formal planning and performance management mechanisms of health boards.	Waiting times are reported monthly to Welsh Government. From June all health board figures will be included in the NHS delivery framework.
	Deliver improvements to adult diagnostic services through the National Integrated Autism Service. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a national model that will be implemented across Wales • On-going monitoring and reporting of progress against the agreed standards of the service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Integrated Autism Service is available in Powys, Cardiff & Vale, Cwm Taf, Gwent, North Wales, West Wales and Western Bay. • IAS services report to the Welsh Government on a quarterly basis. The IAS services have developed service standards for the collection of outcome focussed monitoring data.

Assessment and Diagnosis		
What we want to achieve	What will we do	Progress
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adult diagnosis community of practice has been established to support improvements to diagnostic services. • An adult waiting time standard is being considered, lessons learned from the children's waiting time pilot will inform how the waiting time data will be collected for adults.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Partnership Boards will be required to report on progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Partnership Boards submit quarterly returns through the Integrated Care Fund

Meeting Support Needs		
What do we want to achieve	What we will do	Progress
Autistic children, young people and adults and their family and carers can access advice and preventative services to address unmet need in education, employment and health and social care	Bring forward legislative reform for children and young people with additional learning needs in December 2016 and monitor progress	<p>The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill was passed by the National Assembly for Wales on 12 December 2016 and subsequently became an Act on 24 January 2018 following Royal Assent.</p> <p>There will be a three year implementation period from September 2020, using a mandatory phased approach. Learners with existing statements will transfer to the new system within two years, and all other learners with non-statutory plans within three years.</p> <p>The current Special Educational Needs system will be entirely phased out by summer 2023.</p> <p>Consultation on the draft ALN Code and regulations to accompany the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 was undertaken in 2019 and responses are under consideration.</p>
	Develop and Publish a Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services under the Social Services and Well-being Wales Act 2014 and NHS Act in partnership with stakeholders including autistic people and their parents and carers.	<p>The consultation for the Code of Practice and evaluation of responses is complete and the technical workshops are organised for July and October to discuss where improvements can be made.</p> <p>Consultations of the draft document with stakeholders will be held in November in Llandudno and Carmarthen. It is anticipated the draft Code will be published for consultation at the end of 2019.</p>

Meeting Support Needs																							
What do we want to achieve	What we will do	Progress																					
	Continue to develop and roll out our 'Learning with Autism' programmes to improve support available to children and young people across early years, primary, secondary and further education sectors	The National Autism Team continues with their successful programmes in both Junior and Secondary schools. They are co-producing FE and Work Based learning schemes. More detail is available in their annual report.																					
	Improve opportunities for people with autism. This includes monitoring the delivery of the Getting Ahead Two programme to support long term youth employment for people with learning difficulties or disabilities including ASD	<p>Statistics and outcomes for the first two years have been provided by the Getting Ahead 2 grant</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yrs 1-2</th> <th>Y2</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No of referrals</td> <td>105</td> <td>51</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No of vocational Profiles</td> <td>105</td> <td>42</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No on unpaid placement</td> <td>47</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No on paid placement</td> <td>39</td> <td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No of job starts</td> <td>18</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No of job sustained</td> <td>16</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yrs 1-2	Y2	No of referrals	105	51	No of vocational Profiles	105	42	No on unpaid placement	47	21	No on paid placement	39	26	No of job starts	18	4	No of job sustained	16	4
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	Welsh Government to take action to become an autism friendly employer by participating in the Positive About Working with Autism Programme	In the Equality and Inclusion Action plan 2017 – 2020 Welsh Government agreed: 'Welsh Government is an autism friendly employer – Engage with staff with autism to identify what specific actions could be put in place : e.g. buddy system, training for teams etc.'																					

Meeting Support Needs		
What do we want to achieve	What we will do	Progress
		<p>To support this action Welsh Government have;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up an Informal ASD Network which is an active peer support network. There is an identified Director in Welsh Government as an informal champion / sponsor. The Director has also been reverse mentored by the ASD Network Chair. The Director has written and published a blog to all staff on her experience of being reversed mentored by an autistic colleague. • As part of induction training for all new staff, the ASD Network is introduced, along with all the other staff diversity networks. • The Welsh Government Diversity Award 2019 was won by the Chair of the new ASD Network. Recognising the impact it's had on autistic staff members and colleagues who may have autistic family members. The Chair has also written several blogs which have helped people understand what it's like to be autistic on a day to day basis. The blogs have been shared and recognised by the wider Civil Service and Cabinet Office. • Autism Awareness Week 2018 – The launch of the ASD Network took place and there were a number of blogs published from colleagues. As part of the week there was an Autism Awareness session where we invited a welsh Autism Blogger to come

Meeting Support Needs		
What do we want to achieve	What we will do	Progress
		<p>into the office and give her account of being autistic. Intranet articles published to all staff with quotes of support from Permanent Secretary and Board Diversity Champion .Also included in the article were links to TED Talks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Panel Chair Training – Last year, all HR Panel chairs attended refresher training. Part of this training was a session on reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process. A big emphasis was placed Autism and how as an organisation we can attract, recruit and retain autistic members of staff, and what adjustments may be requested and how we can accommodate them. This includes allowing an autistic person to take notes into an interview if they request it. • Visitors Guidance: Autism friendly guidance has now been produced for anyone who maybe visiting Cathays Park for an interview or a meeting. It gives clear instruction on accessing the building, reception and going through security. This is now published on the external Welsh Government web site. https://gov.wales/visiting-welsh-government-cathays-park
	Work with organisations across Wales to raise awareness and for them to become autism-friendly working environments. This will include	The National Autism Team has delivered training and awareness sessions to a variety of public and private sector work places. They have identified development of

Meeting Support Needs		
What do we want to achieve	What we will do	Progress
	promoting the Positive About Working with Autism Programme	this area in their work plan for 2019/20,
	<p>Delivery of the National Integrated Autism Service. This will be implemented from April 2016 over a three year period and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of a standard diagnostic assessment service for adults • Provision of advice and support for all people with autism including their family and carers • Development of training and support packages for professionals 	All regions in Wales now have an IAS service which offers a standard diagnostic assessment service for adults. They also provide advice and support for all people with autism and their families / carers. Training and support packages for professionals are available although these vary from region to region depending on the maturity of the service and the resources available.

Awareness raising, Information and Training		
What do we want to achieve	What will we do	Progress
Autistic people and their families and their family and carers and professionals report they have access to good quality information, advice and training on autism which meets their needs	Ensure autistic people and their family and carers as well as professionals are made aware of the resources available on the ASDinfoWales website.	A summary of the National Autism Team annual report (at Appendix Two) highlights the continuing development of the website and increasing web hits.
	Develop a communication strategy setting out specific actions by end of January 2017.	The National Autism Team has developed and published an engagement strategy
	Awareness raising campaign Work with the partners, including autistic people and their families and carers to develop a joint approach to rolling out an autism awareness raising campaign, including increased awareness of available support services and resources including those on the ASDinfoWales website.	The National Autism Team continues to work closely with stakeholders, including families and carers, detailed information is in their annual report (summary at Appendix Two)
	Continue to develop information and resources for identified priority areas, to be freely available through the ASDinfoWales website. Priority areas will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.	The National Autism Team annual report (summary at Appendix Two) highlights the progress achieved in developing new resources and delivering existing packages.
	Develop and deliver training resources and material to raise awareness of autism and support for professionals working with children or adults with autism. Priority areas will be	The National Autism Team's annual report (summary at Appendix Two) highlights the progress achieved. Priorities are updated in their annual work plan.

Awareness raising, Information and Training		
What do we want to achieve	What will we do	Progress
	updated on an annual basis.	
	Work collaboratively with other organisations dealing with non-devolved matters to raise awareness of autism. This will include the police, fire service, courts and the National Offenders Management Service.	The National Autism Team' annual report (summary at Appendix Two) highlights the progress achieved in working with non devolved organisations such as the fire service.
	Update and expand guidance for housing services on supporting autistic people	The guidance has been completed, and will be roll out during 2019/20. See the National Development Team annual report (summary at Appendix Two).
	Continue to support the ASD National Leads and team to provide expert advice and guidance on autism to the Welsh Government, professional groups and stakeholders.	The National Autism team supports quarterly meetings and promotes good practice sharing.

Planning, Monitoring and Stakeholder Involvement

What do we want to achieve	What we will do	Progress
Children, young people and adults with autism and their family and carers are involved and consulted in the delivery of ASD SAP	Establish an Implementation Advisory Group to monitor progress and delivery of the specific actions in the Strategic Action Plan and Delivery Plan. This group will be established before 1 April 2017.	An ASD Implementation Advisory Board first meeting was in March 2017, the most recent meeting was in February 2019
	Publish an annual report setting out the progress in relation to the specific actions within the Strategic Action Plan and Delivery Plan. This will include performance information and timeliness of assessment and diagnosis.	The first Annual report was published June 2018, this includes information on the new ASD children and young people's waiting time standard. The second annual report publication is June 2019.
	Ensure Regional Partnership Boards report on progress in relation to the specific actions within the Strategic Action Plan and Delivery Plan. This will include performance information and timeliness of assessment and diagnosis.	Regional Partnership Board's continue to provide quarterly reports on the Integrated Care Fund which is supporting the roll out of the Integrated Autism Service.
	Welsh Government to consider ways in which disability data will be incorporated into the new social services data collection.	The new data will be available by 2020-21
	Working with partners to look at how we collect data on meaningful outcomes to inform about the quality and effectiveness of the services provided and to identify where there may be continuing gaps in support.	A data collection system has been developed and will be piloted across the IAS services from March 2019
	Establish a GP register for autism	Initial discussions have been held with GPC Wales and

Planning, Monitoring and Stakeholder Involvement

What do we want to achieve	What we will do	Progress
		<p>NWIS about establishing a register within the GP clinical system. Several issues have been identified including, the broadness of the Autism spectrum; diagnosis can only be made by a specialist, the need for clear guidance on coding, purpose of the register and actions that would be expected of general practice. We have agreed to take to the health board Associate Medical Directors Group to identify a lead to work with policy colleagues and Autism specialists.</p>
	<p>Consult on changes to the Social Services and Well-being Wales Act Part 2, Code of Practice in relation Population Needs Assessment and Area Plans, mandating core themes</p>	<p>We will issue additional guidance on the core theme for learning disability/autism to set out our expectations in relation to services for autistic people. We will review draft assessments to ensure sufficient consideration of autism service development.</p>
	<p>Monitor the implementation of legislative requirements under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act and keep the need for future autism related legislation under review.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government contributed to the scrutiny of the Autism (Wales) Bill. We will carefully consider the recommendations made by scrutiny committee in the development of the forthcoming code of practice and future service improvement priorities.</p>

Appendix Two – WLGA Annual Report Summary

ASD National Development Team Annual Report Summary against Work Plan 2018– 19

The work plan for 2018/19 set out the high level priorities for the National ASD Development Team produced by the team for WG review and agreement. It was supplemented by a more detailed activity work programme and a budget summary.

The Autism Spectrum Disorder National Development Team supports the delivery of the ASD Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan in conjunction with key stakeholders. The team has worked with partners across Wales in response to engagement with autistic individuals and parents and carers, together with professionals, to produce an extensive set of resources to increase awareness of autism and to support autistic adults and children, professionals and service providers. The 2018/19 work plan and work programme was a consolidation of this work and included the ambition to rollout out the resources across Wales in an effective way with the support of partners and stakeholders. The work plan built on a foundation of a number of years of work among partners with a commitment to supporting and responding to the needs of autistic individuals and children and their parents and carers.

The implementation of the Integrated Autism Service across Wales was a further key priority and the team worked with the 7 Regional Partnership Boards (Social Care and Health) to support the effective establishment and delivery of these services for the benefit of autistic individuals, children with autism and their parents and carers in the context of existing services. The resources referenced above represent an important underpinning of the IAS delivery. The priorities in the work plan 2018/19 were based on a combination of priorities identified by Welsh Government; on-going discussions and informal feedback from stakeholders; the Evaluation of the IAS and ASD Strategic Action Plan Interim Report ²⁹ and the knowledge and experience of the National ASD Development Team, building on previous and existing work.

The work plan included an informal review of the role and structure of the National ASD Development Team and the WLGA implemented recommendations/ changes required.

²⁹ Evaluation of the Integrated Autism Service and ASD Strategic Action Plan: Interim Report, Dr Duncan Holtom and Dr Sarah Lloyd Jones, People & Work, ©Crown, 01/03/2018

1. Increasing use of existing training materials and resources	
Activity	Achievement/ Outcome
1.1 To support the increased use of ASD training and support materials that have been developed by the National Development Team in partnership e.g. Learning with Autism, Working with Autism and Can you See Me?	<p>Rolled out a train the trainer model in partnership with LAs, National Museum of Wales, community groups etc.</p> <p>Developed a strategic implementation plan for the LWA programmes</p> <p>Delivered a wide range of training sessions across a variety of sectors – Coast Guard, DWP, Colleges, Sports groups, Community Trusts etc.</p> <p>Began to scope out the impact evaluation of LWA programme</p>
1.2 To make necessary adjustments to resources and materials taking into account feedback from stakeholders and those who have used the resources	<p>Engaged with a wide range of stakeholders to gain views and suggested changes to existing resources e.g. some of the Autism Awareness questions were amended following feedback.</p> <p>Feedback responses have been collated to help inform some of the team’s work in 2019/20 and 2020/21 A mailing list of stakeholders - including autistic adults and parents and carers has been developed to work on updating and revising existing resources in a planned and phased way.</p> <p>The team has changed its name in response to feedback.</p>
1.3 To continue to maintain and further develop the ASDinfoWales website as an integral resource for autistic children, autistic individuals, parents and carers and professionals.	<p>The usage of the website continues to grow (<i>see stats in Chapter 1 of Annual Report document</i>)</p> <p>A specific “Resources leaflet” was produced that helps people</p>

	navigate the website more effectively and assists professionals working with autistic people. Website content has been continually maintained and updated.
1.4 To support the roll out of the National Training Framework	<p>Work begun on mapping existing training against the framework this has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health colleagues, • IASs, • Education Professionals, • Social Care Workers. <p>Initial work undertaken to look at possible accreditation of resources against the framework. Linked to CPD hours.</p>
1.5 To complete Emergency Services resources package	<p>Pilot training package completed and to be rolled out in two pathfinder areas – Dyfed Powys Police and South Wales Fire and Rescue in 2019/20.</p> <p>Train the trainer model developed as part of the package development</p> <p>Implementation plan produced.</p>
1.6 To support Mental Health Training Adults	Aspects specific adult mental health training has been rolled out across Wales
1.7 To scope an evaluation of the Learning with Autism scheme	Initial work re proposed model, impact measures, pilot settings etc. has been undertaken. The framework and method have been finalised to roll out in 2019-20.
	For further information, please see Chapters 1,2,4 and 8 of the Annual Report 2018/19

2. Training including development of new resources	
Activity	Achievement/ Outcome
2.1 To develop new resources concerning behaviour management training for parents/professionals	<p>Initial scoping undertaken re issues. Linked with IASs that had delivered specific behaviour management training to look at uptake and future developments. Further research is needed in this area to ensure that any development does not duplicate existing provision, is effective with a strong evidence base and can be used by parents.</p> <p>Some IASs areas already rolling out Parenting Behaviour Management courses – the feedback and outcome information will be used to inform work in this area in 2019-20 and 2020-21</p>
2.2 To develop new resources in relation to increasing knowledge and understanding of co-occurring mental health and autism in Children and Young People (within CAMHS and Children’s Social Services / Education teams - Powys work)	<p>Initial scoping with autistic young adults who had been in contact with specialist CAMHS services was undertaken. In addition, meetings have been held with autistic adults who have developed long and enduring mental health issues to look at what could have helped them when their difficulties began. This work has taken longer than anticipated as those involved needed additional time to feel comfortable discussing their lived experiences.</p> <p>Meetings with Hywel Dda and Powys ND Services have been held to look at possible model and roll out. Specification in draft</p>
2.3 To develop an access to leisure programme - adults	<p>This has been rolled out via the “Can You See Me” campaign and in partnership with IASs and ASD Leads. The team have also trained such groups as the Ospreys, Swansea City Football club, and the National Museum of Wales.</p>

<p>2.4 To further develop post diagnostic support for the parents / carers of autistic children/ young people</p>	<p>The parent carer film has been produced – this involved parents and carers and autistic young people in addition to professionals. The project took longer to complete because it was co-produced but the end result was worth the extra time.</p>
<p>2.5 To develop a Further Education and Work Based Learning programme</p>	<p>The “What is autism?” FE and WBL films produced – co produced with autistic people, parent carers and professionals. Task and finish groups established – via Colegau Cymru and NTF Wales. Resource packs for professionals and autistic people produced in draft. To be completed and rolled out for the new academic term in September 2019</p>
<p>2.6 To review and develop appropriate post diagnostic support for Adults</p>	<p>Post Diagnostic programme has been produced by 21 High Street and IASs (C&V and Gwent). This has been distributed to all IASs via the National ASD Development Team. Scoping work re the existing adult guides has begun. Feedback has been sought from some autistic adults and IASs. A much larger exercise is planned for 2019-20 to look at content, format and distribution A mapping exercise has been undertaken via the Community of Practice to look at existing post diagnostic support, sharing of best practice and any significant gaps.</p>
<p>2.7 To further enhance early years resources with “Ble Mae Teifi?” campaign</p>	<p>A small catalogue of “Teifi” photographs have been collected to be used to promote the Early Years Scheme.</p>
<p>For further information, please see Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7 of the Annual Report 2018/19</p>	

3. Supporting further development and embedding of Integrated Autism Services	
Activity	Achievement/ Outcome
3.1 To further support the effective implementation of the IAS across Wales	<p>The IAS leads meetings and the Community of Practice have been facilitated throughout the year by the team with a strong focus on effective implementation and delivery.</p> <p>Specific training for the IASs has been developed by the National Team and is being rolled out across Wales. All 7 IASs are developed and operational across Wales.</p>
3.2 To review and update the guidance for IASs	The guidance has been reviewed and updated in collaboration with IAS leads.
3.3 To develop and support the implementation of a data / performance monitoring system	<p>A key data set has been developed to be rolled out in 2019-20 to be facilitated via Data Cymru. <i>The resource and time required to achieve this agreement with the IAS leads should not be underestimated.</i></p> <p>The “Outcome Star” distance travelled planning tool is being utilised in every IAS. A full programme of training has been commissioned and delivered. An all Wales outcomes model is being developed and implemented.</p> <p>A suit of group interventions and outcome measures is being discussed to be implemented in 2019-20.</p>
3.4 To review the ICF Reporting Framework	This has been completed as part of the data set and reporting framework work and will be incorporated into that system.
3.5 To increase awareness and understanding of the IAS across Wales	The IASs remit, background etc., form part of our core presentation that has been presented at conferences, RPBs, Head of Inclusion Forums, and at all our awareness raising or

	<p>training events.</p> <p>The National Leads have engaged with many Local Authorities during 2018/19 in every region</p>
	<p>For further information, please see Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 10 of the Annual Report 2018/19</p>

4. Facilitating Networks	
Activity	Achievement/ Outcome
4.1 To facilitate the National ASD Leads Forum	<p>This has met 4 times in 2018/19 – one session was a joint meeting and exchange of practise session with the IAS Leads. There was a clear work plan for the year to explore such topics as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The role of the ASD Lead ○ The Autism Bill ○ The Code of Practice for Autism Services ○ How to roll out the resources in an effective and sustainable manner ○ Knowledge and good practise exchange
4.2 To facilitate the National IAS Network	<p>This has met 4 times in 2018/19 – one session was a joint session with the IAS Leads for knowledge exchange. There was a clear work plan for the year to explore such topics as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The data set ○ The interface with existing services ○ Reporting mechanisms ○ Measuring outcomes ○ Issues and concerns regarding the IAS model ○ Best practice
4.3 To develop and establish a community of practice for adult diagnosis and IAS implementation	<p>The Community of Practice has been established. Via the group the following have been agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adult diagnostic pathways ○ Agreed quality standards ○ Post diagnostic support ○ Guidance ○ Referral routes

	<p>In addition, the group has shared best practice, fed into research and learned of the latest research from a range of universities and individuals. Established an effective space to share experience, discuss issues and share solutions.</p>
<p>4.4 To progress engagement with housing providers in order to highlight specific issues to be considered in providing housing for autistic people (social housing sector and PRS) and ensure any specific needs of autistic people can be met by housing providers</p>	<p>A task and finish group of autistic adults, parent carers and professionals (housing and autism) was established.</p> <p>Revised Housing guidance aligned to the Housing (Wales) Act has been produced.</p>
	<p>For further information, please see Chapters 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 10 & 11 of the Annual Report 2018/19</p>

5. Working with partners and stakeholders, including Welsh Government	
Activity	Achievement/ Outcome
5.1 To develop an engagement strategy, with a focus on co-production	<p>The engagement and participation strategy was co-produced and the draft was launched at the Going Gold Event at the Senedd on World Autism Day.</p> <p>The strategy was shared on ASDinfoWales for consultation. A mailing list of autistic people and parent carers who wish to be involved in the process has been compiled. This will be continually updated and amended depending on the focus of the work.</p>
<p>5.2 a. To support the development of WG Code of Practice on the delivery of autism in Wales and work with local authorities, health boards and other partners in implementing the requirements of the Code when published.</p> <p>b. To maintain an overview on the progress of the proposed Autism Bill and support its development, if appropriate, through highlighting the positive on-going work on autism across Wales.</p>	<p>a. The team helped facilitate the Code of Practice consultation events</p> <p>b. The team helped to coordinate the response to the proposed Autism Bill – this included giving evidence to the Health, Social Care and Sports Committee</p>
5.3 To establish and facilitate new governance arrangements/advisory board to oversee delivery of work of the National Development team and to drive improvements in identified priority areas for ASD.	Initial work has begun on establishing the board and management group (terms of reference drafted etc.)
5.4 To progress an awareness raising campaign for autism in Wales	This has been the cornerstone of our awareness raising, training and engagement work.

	<p>The team has presented at a number of conferences, awareness raising and other events including the Autism Shows, the Education Show, Housing events, Professional networks etc.</p>
<p>5.5 To support and enable development of stronger links between Regional Partnership Boards and ongoing work at local and regional levels on autism</p>	<p>The Strategic Lead has met with each RPB, with each IAS lead and presented on the work of the Local Authorities at a local level, the IAS and the wider autism agenda. This is ongoing work.</p> <p>The team have attended regional events, stakeholder groups, steering groups, planning days, awareness raising days etc. all over Wales</p>
<p>5.6 To further contact with other sectors to raise awareness of IASs and achieve senior level buy in and commitment to contributing to work on autism as appropriate</p>	<p>The team have met regularly with 3rd sector partners e.g. the NAS, the Autism Directory.</p> <p>The team have also made key strategic links with elected members and senior officers in Local Authorities, senior officers in Health Boards, Universities, etc.</p> <p>The team have developed a MOU with Public Health Wales and developed a joint work plan which has been agreed between the WLGA and PHW.</p>
<p>5.7 To coordinate an Autism Wales Conference in partnership with PHW, NAS and other key stakeholders</p>	<p>A national conference was held during World Autism Week “Promoting Autistic Wellbeing” in Swansea at the Liberty Stadium.</p> <p>The Event was co-produced with autistic people, parents/ carers and professionals. It was a self-funded event and £14k of sponsorship was secured from public, private and third sector partners.</p>

<p>5.8 To support National, European and International Exchange of Good Practice</p>	<p>The work with Cardiff University’s School of Psychology, Wales Autism Research Centre has continued with increased engagement with European partners in Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and Spain.</p> <p>The SIGNs project / Birthday Party film won Cardiff University’s Innovation & Impact Award for partnership working in Healthcare in 2019, including one that was the “People’s Choice”</p>
	<p>For further information, please see Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11 of the Annual Report 2018/19</p>

June 2019

Sara Harvey – National Strategic Lead for Autism
Wendy Thomas – National Professional Lead for Autism

Appendix Three – Glossary

ACT	Associated Community Training Limited
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ALN	Additional learning needs
ALNET	Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act 2018
AoLE	Areas of Learning and Experience
CMHTs	Community Mental Health Teams
Economic Contract	The Economic Contract is the framework for a new relationship with businesses looking to access finance, requiring businesses to demonstrate their commitment to growth, fair work, employee health and skills and reducing their carbon footprint, reflecting the kind of business behaviours that many successful and responsible businesses exhibit.
EWC	Education Workforce Council
GP	General Practitioner
GPC Wales	General Practitioner contract
IAS	Integrated Autism Service
ICF	Integrated care fund
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LA	Local authority
LDILP	Learning Disability Improving Lives Programme
LHB	Local health board
LwA	Learning with Autism
NAT	National Autism Team
ND	Neurodevelopmental
NWIS	NHS Wales Informatics Service
PHW	Public health wales

ReACT	A programme of funding for training for individuals facing redundancy to gain new skills and find employment.
RPB	Regional Partnership Board
Social Model of disability	The Social Model holds that a person isn't 'disabled' because of their impairment, health condition, or the ways in which they may differ from what is commonly considered the medical 'norm'; rather it is the physical and attitudinal barriers in society – prejudice, lack of access adjustments and systemic exclusion – that disable people.
T4CYP	Together for children and young people
TED talks	TED Talks are influential videos from expert speakers
WCCIS	Welsh Community Care Information System
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association
Working Wales	Working Wales is delivered by Careers Wales, is funded by Welsh Government with support from the European Social Fund