

Autism Strategy Briefing

We see the person first and their autism as part of the richness which makes them unique.

We have over 30 years experience and a proven track record in supporting people with autism to lead full lives as active, included citizens. We are passionate about providing support which gives people the opportunity to explore their strengths and skills, and build their confidence and abilities.

This briefing describes our approach and illustrates how we contribute to achieving the aims of the Scottish Strategy for Autism (2011).

Our Track Record



- We currently support 260 people with autism, a number which is growing due to our reputation for designing and delivering creative, personalised and robust services for individuals with complex needs.
- Young people, under 25 years, account for over 40% of the people with autism whom we currently support and we have extensive experience of working with families and multi-agency professionals through transitions.
- We individually tailor each person's support to their circumstances in order that we maximise their independence and complement support available from other sources.
- We offer support for long-term supported living, short-term interventions, short-breaks and community day opportunities. We support people in their own home, their family home and in community locations.
- Our Community Development Workers link people into existing local resources and source new opportunities for social and micro enterprises, volunteering and education.
- Many people we support have additional complex support needs including co-occurring conditions and behaviours which challenge. The very low level of support service breakdown we experience demonstrates the success of our person-centred approach.
- Our staff are trained and supported by accredited positive behaviour instructors and autism specialists; using best practice in robust outcome-focused support strategies and positive behaviour interventions.
- We design and cost each service individually and are experienced in Self-Directed Support (SDS) and other funding arrangements. Over 100 of the people with autism we currently support have an Individual Service Fund.

Our Approach



Our approach has 6 essential elements:

1. A person-centred approach with outcome-focused planning

Our approach to support planning is highly personalised; ensuring that each person's support is individually tailored to deliver what's important to them. Outcome-based support plans detail a person's needs and how their autism impacts on everyday life. This support is delivered by a small, dedicated team who really know and understand the person, their preferred routines, communication and coping strategies. We also have extensive experience of group planning approaches, enabling families and people with autism to jointly explore a range of community participation opportunities.



We were very involved in (worker) meetings regarding getting to know Matthew's likes and dislikes. I valued the communication planning and Crisis Risk Intervention Support Plan meetings.

Maureen, mum.

2. Partnership working

Nurturing genuine partnerships with the people we support and their families underpins the development and delivery of all our services; ensuring they are of a high quality. We also work extensively with specialist agencies and associated professionals to provide joined-up services and promote the health and wellbeing of the people with autism we support.



I have an excellent relationship with this organisation. They work extremely well with Social Work and other agencies in developing their services.

Diane, Care Manager.

3. Positive responses to complex needs and behaviour which challenges

Many of the people with autism we support have additional support needs relating to a learning disability, mental or physical health or behaviour that challenges. Often people come with a long history of support breakdowns but we have a reputation for sticking with people through life's ups and downs. It is testament to the success of our approach that 40% of people have received their support for over 10 years. Our approach is person-centred with a strong ethos of supporting people to communicate, exercise their rights and have their needs met in an empowering way. By managing and responding to complex and challenging situations positively and creatively we ensure that each person has the best possible opportunities in life.



The organisation has always been positive and proactive and prepared to seek support and advice from others when issues arose or care plans required review.

Val, Complex Needs Team, Social Work.

4. Excellent staff training and support

We ensure that every worker who is supporting a person with autism receives the necessary training to enable them to provide high quality person-centred, autism specific support. Information from person-centred planning work is blended with training on autism theory, delivered by our Autism Support Specialists (whose qualifications include Post Graduate Certificates and Diplomas in Autism). Staff are supported to understand and respect each person's sensory and communication differences, develop an understanding of the important aspects of their life and how they need to be supported in relation to their autism. Our Autism Support Specialists work alongside teams to ensure an ongoing response to changing needs and outcomes. In addition staff have access to our Autism Practice Development Group and online information forum.



I feel that the staff had excellent training. I enjoyed being part of the 'Listen to Me' process and passing on my knowledge at the planning meetings .

Betty, mum.

5. Recognising the importance of the environment

We support a large number of people with autism in their own or family home. Our experience demonstrates that the right accommodation along with appropriate assistive technologies and/or relatively small scale housing adaptations can be enormously beneficial. Our housing service can undertake detailed environmental needs assessments to inform housing decisions; alongside the design of low arousal environments (e.g. lighting, acoustics, ventilation, use of colour and materials) aimed at minimising sensory processing difficulties and anxiety. We have an excellent reputation for sourcing suitable, high-quality tenancies from a wide range of housing providers.



I feel that my daughter is in the right accommodation with excellent support .

Betty, Mum.

6. Building capacity for community life

We have built considerable expertise in supporting people with autism to develop and enjoy a wide range of community opportunities and activities. Our planning processes encourage people to think about their outcomes in relation to developing and sustaining community activities and networks. Our community development approach maximises opportunities for individuals whilst building the capacity of neighbourhoods to be welcoming, inclusive places for people with autism thus creating wider, lasting impact. Individuals and their staff can participate in our 'Living a Life' course to map out their local community and develop opportunities for volunteering, paid employment, learning and leisure activities in their area.



Staff work in partnership with service users and their relatives to discuss risks and behaviours and action plans are agreed together to support individuals to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.

Care Inspectorate Report.

Our Strategy



We have a well developed autism strategy with multi-agency endorsement and, in line with the Scottish Strategy on Autism (2011), ensures that support is designed to meet people's unique requirements to help them achieve their outcomes.

We are committed to consolidating our approach through:

- Further developing highly personalised services, across Scotland, to ensure young people and adults with autism can access support at every life stage.
- Extending our delivery of robust, responsive, cost-effective services for people with complex needs, particularly in areas where there is a lack of suitable alternatives to out of area placements.
- Working collaboratively with Local Authorities to ensure people with autism can benefit from the greater choice and control afforded by SDS. All our services are individually costed and therefore easily transferrable to SDS funding options.
- Collating data on the number of people with autism we support, as well as gathering feedback on individual support and outcomes to inform quality assurance and future service planning.
- Delivering our 'Outcomes for Living' programme, a participative 2 day course for individuals and families to explore what outcomes are meaningful to them and introduce SDS in partnership with the local authority SDS team.
- Extending our Community Development approach to facilitate greater involvement of people with autism in local communities.

Get in touch

This briefing is supported by our Autism Strategy, our Autism Training Strategy, Autism Support Planning Practice Guidance as well as a leaflet for individuals and families. We welcome the opportunity to discuss further development of our services for people with autism in more detail. To find out more get in touch with us at the details below:

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