

# Local Implementation

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## Collaborative working

The attached spreadsheet gives a comprehensive overview of the current status of local autism strategies and the Coordination Team's ongoing engagement with them. The work of the National Autism Coordination Project is moving to a new phase, now that it is past the point in its evolution where local plans are submitted. At the Fourth Scottish Strategy for Autism Conference in December Professor Jean MacLellan talked about the new national outcomes for the strategy, linking it with government policy on health, equality and diversity. Although these outcomes continue to be a priority for implementation of local plans, we are now more concerned about two things:

- Better outcomes for people.
- How to listen and hear the voices of people on the Autism spectrum.

In relation to the professional field, here are some examples of our future focus as we move into this new phase:

In education, anecdotally we are told children with autism do not get the support they need. The GIRFEC approach attempts to improve outcomes for children and their parents by supporting partnership working with public services. It is important to strike the right balance in education and evaluate the evidence base for specialist provision, given that, as we know, across Scotland, services for children with autism are expensive. In the next few months, Social Work Scotland will be undertaking a piece of work looking at the generic to specialist spectrum in education. This doesn't just involve teaching, but giving attention to the physical design of the environment that makes it possible.

In relation to adulthood, we are working with North Lanarkshire and a component of NHS Lanarkshire. In discussion with those two parties we agreed that we need greater connectivity between autism and mental health in autism. It is likely we will conduct a pilot within a defined population: possibly Bellshill. We are all keen that the findings from such a project will be practice based.

A third example of what we plan to focus on over the next year in order to improve outcomes for people with autism is a project focussing on Self Directed Support. The appetite for this has developed from the providers' collaborative meetings we held last year and will involve providers and other agencies working with people with autism and also those developing systems around SDS, including brokerage, with a view to improving choice and control for people with autism.

Those are future projects facing professionals. Just as important is working with people on the Autism spectrum and their families. In Highland, we continue to work with a new strategy group. Having delivered an induction session for the group focusing on the national Outcomes Framework, we continue to offer support in engaging with people with autism, both through the strategy meeting and wider Network events. January's event, held in Inverness was entitled "Change". Its theme was Choice and Control and focused on autistic people being treated with dignity and respect as well as being able to get the services they need, with their needs understood by those who provide services. There were presentations from people with autism, which were broadcast live, to reach as wide an audience as possible.



Other future plans include a partnership visit to the Western isles with NHS Education Scotland, looking at strategic engagement, asset mapping, a training plan and direct practice focussed work with Primary Care staff. January's Autism Strategy Collaborative event, once rescheduled following recent postponement due to the recent storms, will focus on communication with people with autism in relation to the successful implementation of local autism strategies, addressing how to break down the barriers in communication between the autistic community and local autism leads. It will also examine how current national policy, such as Scotland's House of Care, can support this communication.

