Autism Network Scotland
Annual Report 1
June 2013

Autism Network Scotland
University of Strathclyde
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Executive Summary

The Minister for Public Health, Michael Matheson launched the Scottish Strategy for Autism on 2nd November 2011. At the launch he announced his priorities for action, one of which was to fund the Scottish Autism Service Network according to the Strategy Recommendations. In 2012 a grant was made to the University of Strathclyde to revitalise and sustain the Network. After due consultation, it was agreed to name the new network Autism Network Scotland. A series of quarterly interim reports have demonstrated how the team is undertaking the task of revitalising and sustaining Autism Network Scotland.

This first annual report will provide an overview of the on-going development of Autism Network Scotland both internally and in relation to external partnerships, professional networks and support of the Scottish Strategy for Autism.

This report aims to provide:

I. An outline of the rationale and activities of the Network in the period from May 2012 – June 2013.

II. An outline of the aims of the Network as identified by the audit of Autism Network Scotland (previously the Scottish Autism Network Service) in 2007 and targets outlined in the 2011 bid for continued funding for Autism Network Scotland.


IV. An outline of the involvement in Autism Network Strategy through membership of the Autism Strategy Subgroups

V. An overview of existing membership and virtual and face-to-face networks

VI. An overview of existing partnerships and examples of opportunities for future projects
Rationale and initial activities of the Network

Following recommendation 15 of the Scottish Strategy for Autism, it was agreed by the ASD Reference Group that Autism Network Scotland had a long-term role to play in creating a hub for information and being a catalyst for sharing good autism practice amongst professionals. This means that the Network will play an important role in delivering outcomes for professionals, individuals on the spectrum and their families and carers. The Scottish Government has continued to demonstrate its commitment to the Network and the wider Autism Strategy by providing funding until 2015.

Following consultation, in May 2012, the Scottish Autism Service Network (SASN) became Autism Network Scotland, marking the start of a new era for the Network. A new staff team was recruited to start work on May 14th 2012.

The Network Team and Location

The Network team currently comprises Emma Hanley, Network Co-ordinator, two part-time advisors (25 hours per week), Ewelina Rydzewska and Jayne Porter, and an administrator, Alistair Gilmour. Autism Network Scotland now also manage and maintain the Scottish Strategy for Autism website which will be funded at a .1 position (7 hours) by the Scottish Government – a role which will be shared by Jayne Porter and Ewelina Rydzewska, thus slightly increasing their hours.

Over the last three months, both advisors have been seconded to other organisations, in a consultative capacity to support key projects involved in the implementation of the Autism Strategy: Ewelina has supported the analysis of data collected in the National Autism Mapping Project and Jayne continues to support the rollout of the Autism Toolbox. Each advisor has now been seconded outside of their core Network hours to ensure that Autism Network Scotland is working at full capacity.

Autism Network Scotland is part of the National Centre for Autism Studies and the team are now located in the John Anderson Campus at the University of Strathclyde, a move which has enabled the Network to be part of a wider culture that prioritises the impact of work done, at and through the University, on the development of others through knowledge exchange. The culture of information dissemination and personal and professional development, illustrated through the university, provides an appropriate setting for Autism Network Scotland and is in keeping with its overarching aims.

Network Aims

In 2005-2006, the Scottish Autism Service Network staff undertook a nationwide consultation with a range of professionals, individuals on the autism spectrum and their family members/carers. The consultation helped to identify the needs of the autism community and the role of a nationwide network of professionals working in the field of autism. The results of the consultation provided the initial
direction for Scottish Autism Service Network and have shaped the focus of Autism Network Scotland today. A summary of the current aims of Autism Network Scotland is outlined below:

**Autism Network Scotland Aims**

- To share knowledge, understanding and values within and between groups to improve the development of services and improve standards for those with autism.
- To develop networking opportunities for individuals on the autism spectrum.
- To develop a range of professional networks across Scotland to support and improve communication about, and awareness of, autism.
- To facilitate independent consultation and/or networking for local authorities and central government and to engage people with autism in the consultation process.
- To identify gaps in service delivery and information available to people with autism and their families and carers.
- To signpost professionals, individuals on the spectrum and families and carers to the range of services available both locally and at a national level.
- To create a Scotland-wide information resource to help support users, carers and agencies to achieve better outcomes by working together.
- To facilitate multi-agency working for professionals working in the field of autism.
- To enhance information sharing and multi-agency working regarding children and adults with autism, across the lifespan of individuals on the spectrum.
- To improve information sharing and multi-agency working in smaller authorities and rural areas.
- To provide a platform through which examples of good practice in the field of autism can be shared with professionals through a range of agencies.
- To support the Scottish Strategy for Autism through attendance at the Strategy Subgroups and through the dissemination of information.

### 3) Network Management and Administration Structure

Under the banner of the National Centre for Autism Studies, Autism Network Scotland is located in the School of Education which is part of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Strathclyde. Professor Donald Christie, as Head of School, is the Grant Holder for the Network funding and the Line Manager for all involved in the Network. The team is also given guidance by Emeritus Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop who provides continuity between the former SASN, the Scottish Government Autism Reference Group and the Autism Network Scotland Steering Group, as described below:
4) Autism Network Scotland Steering Group

The Autism Network Scotland (ANS) Steering group reflects a range of autism interests in Scotland and members offer knowledge and expertise from a variety of areas. Emeritus Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop is charged with chairing the Network Steering Group, which includes representatives from the main autism charities in Scotland; organisations with broader interests in the field of learning disabilities, individuals with autism, parents or family members of individuals with autism, professionals from a variety of disciplines, senior University staff and Health, Education and Social Services. The Steering Group continues to:

- guide Autism Network Scotland’s planning and development as an inclusive hub for reliable autism information in Scotland;
- consider the role the Network can play in building professional knowledge and capacity, contributing to good practice events, securing resources, collaborating in networking for the benefit of people with autism
- monitor Network action plans, progress and reporting.

The full steering group meets quarterly and following the initial meeting, two subgroups have been formed: the first to advise on accessibility issues as part of wider IT developments and the second to agree an overarching work-plan for the network. A detailed list of the ANS Steering group members can be found in Appendix 1.

5) Network Action Plan

The Network Action Plan subgroup met in February 2013 to discuss the capacity of the network staff and to prioritise work streams for the period up until September 2013. The group agreed that provisional action plan should be created by Emma Hanley, Network Co-ordinator and that this would form the basis for the work plan for next 6 months. To ensure that the development of the Network is in keeping with the agreed funding outcomes, a number of strategic objectives were pulled from the over-arching aims of the network. These objectives are highlighted below and examples of mechanisms to achieve such objectives can be seen in Appendix 2:

1) To be a hub of impartial and reliable information
2) To identify gaps in service
3) Signposting
4) Knowledge Exchange
5) Supporting communication between The Scottish Government and the wider autism community
6) Sharing good practice
7) Networking Opportunities
8) Supporting the Scottish Strategy for Autism
Supporting the Autism Strategy through Subgroup Membership and Activity

The work of Autism Network Scotland is both policy and needs-led and we respond to information we receive from our Asperger’s (AS) Forum, the ANS Scottish Women with Autism Network (SWAN), virtual networks and other organisations. Information sharing through SWAN and our AS Forum, supports the Strategy to ensure that the interests of those on the spectrum are appropriately represented in other areas of policy development and delivery.

As part of the Network’s role in supporting the Scottish Strategy for Autism the three Network staff each attend one of the ASD Reference Sub Groups: The Network Coordinator Emma Hanley attends Sub Group 1 (Achieving Best Value for Services); Jayne Porter, Network Adviser attends Sub Group 2 (Cross Agency Collaboration and Involvement) and Ewelina Rydzewska, Network Adviser attends Sub Group 4 (Wider Opportunities and Access to Work). The other two sub groups, Diagnosis, Intervention and Support and Research are attended by Aline-Wendy Dunlop and Anna Robinson respectively: they also feed back to the Network on any appropriate matters. The Network now receives funding from the Scottish Government to update and maintain the Scottish Strategy for Autism website. The relevant training for this has recently been completed and the network advisors will be charged with populating the site under direction from the Scottish Government.

Agreement in Government that local authorities be charged with the Autism Strategy means the team have also worked closely with a variety of practitioners responsible for planning an Autism Strategy within a range of local authorities. The role has included information sharing, providing examples of good practice, facilitating meetings and focus groups and supporting consultation with members of the wider community. In March, 2013 the Network hosted ‘A Case for Co-ordination’, a learning event which invited local community planners and practitioners to come together to discuss models of co-ordination for the implementation of a local autism strategy (details of the event can be found in the events section of the report).

6) Achievements to date:

   a) Technology and Informatics

Since its revitalization in 2012, Autism Network Scotland continues to make changes to the way that technology is used to store and disseminate information. We continue to work towards our ultimate goal to utilise technology in a communicative way, which will allow working practice to be both more efficient and cost effective and will reduce the need for creating hard copies of material. Such changes have also helped to ensure that our current data is now accurate and up to date as described below:
• **Storing information**

Autism Network Scotland has successfully transferred contacts and information to a new database, which has enabled us to simplify the processes involved in storing and sorting over 7000 contacts.

• **Information dissemination**

During the first 6 months, the Network undertook a considerable data-cleansing process which enabled us to identify which contacts were active. Accurate data has enabled us to change the way in which information is disseminated and we continue to improve the ways in which we utilise technology to make contact with members.

• **Web presence**

In February 2013, phase 1 of the new website was completed and Autism Network Scotland now have a web presence which enables us to provide accurate and impartial information to people with autism, their parents and carers and to professionals working in the field. The site hosts information about autism; news and events; partnership working; networks and the Scottish Strategy for Autism. Additionally, the site hosts an extensive, categorised library, containing targeted information such as reports, journals and articles. The gallery page also provides an opportunity for people to publish images and documents, which provide people with a platform to depict their own experiences of living and working with autism. The website has had 5,237 hits over the past five months. More information regarding website traffic can be found in Appendix 3. The Network is also working closely with the IT sub group of the ANS steering group to ensure that information is accurate and that the site meets accessibility requirements. In July, Autism Network Scotland will launch their ‘What is Autism’ consultation which will invite people to discuss what autism means to them, including the use of different language and terminology.

The Network also has a presence on social networking sites which populates traffic on the ANS site and allows us to reach a wider audience. We now have a presence on Facebook and Twitter, for example, as a means of drawing attention to news and events posts on our website and to encourage interested users to complete our online membership form. We now have over 300 followers on Twitter, following the creation of our account in February, 2013.

Phase 2 of our web-presence strategy focused on creating a virtual space for people to come together and form on-line communities of practice and our Virtual Networks became live in June. The platform will provide a safe space for practitioners to come together to exchange knowledge and problem solve within a solution-focused and supportive environment. The team has worked hard to create a process which ensures that members of any virtual network are members of Autism Network Scotland and therefore, agree to overarching participation principles before they are given access to specific forums. The team continue to test out processes whereby information can be shared between virtual networks to guarantee
that people with autism continue to shape practice and their voice is heard within these communities. Currently, we are testing out the processes involved in off-line e-consultation.

- **Autism Network Scotland Newsletter**
  A new approach to technology has also allowed for the Autism Network Scotland Newsletter to be created in an electronic format and 4,755 members and contacts were sent copies of the Autism Network Scotland newsletter, *Network News* in November and December, 2013. At this point we were able to estimate that around 4,000 emails were successfully sent on each occasion, however, we had no means of knowing if emails had been opened. Therefore, in February 2013, we began to use *Campaign Monitor*, a piece of software that has enabled us to contact greater numbers and to track communication pathways in more detail. Data regarding the tracking of this information can be seen in Appendix 4.

- **Online Audit – Transition Survey**
  A new approach to technology has enabled the Network to collate information from a wide range of contacts more efficiently. In April, 2013, 417 people completed the Autism Network Scotland *Transitions Survey* over a three week period. The survey was created using the online survey platform, *Qualtrics* which enabled rapid analysis and reporting of the data. The link to the survey was disseminated using *Campaign Monitor* which enabled us to identify which respondents had been reached via email (41.37%) and which respondents had accessed the survey via links on the Autism Network Scotland Website. More information regarding the results of the *Transition Survey* can be found in Appendix 5.

b) **Network Membership: Consultation and Development**
Interest in our practitioner networks continues to grow and membership of Autism Network Scotland has increased by approximately 26.5% over a 12 month period with 50% of that increase occurring in the last quarter (potentially due to the launch of the website). The development of Autism Network Scotland’s practitioner network is a multi-stepped process, and the growth of each individual network requires input and support at a number of key stages including: audit, revitalisation, development and maintenance. This framework has been developed through on-going consultation with existing networks and helps to shape the input of the ANS advisors at key points in any network’s growth. Preliminary evaluation of existing networks revealed that many members found it difficult to meet face-to-face and that they would prefer a virtual network if it could be facilitated and monitored effectively (more information regarding the network development can be found in Appendix 6). These findings have enabled Autism Network Scotland to consider future network events and how to best to facilitate communication between members of virtual networks. It is anticipated that the network membership will increase considerably now that the online forum is live.
All Autism Network Scotland staff have attended a range of events across the country to promote awareness of autism and to target Virtual Network interest and membership. This includes the delivery of presentations, development of market stalls and networking at National events such as Education Scotland’s Health & Wellbeing Practitioners conference and Early Years Transitions event, The ARC’s Scottish Transitions Forum, Friends of CELCIS event, NYJAG Annual National Youth Justice Practitioners’ conference and the International Coalition of Senior Autism Practitioners conference. Autism Network Scotland have also supported a range of new initiatives including the National Autistic Society’s recent campaign, Count Us In and the recent launch of the Scottish Government’s Learning Disability Strategy, The Keys to Life.

c) Partnership Working
A key aim for Autism Network Scotland is to provide impartial advice to professionals, individuals with autism and their families and carers. As such, the Network has developed working partnerships with a range of organisations including: National Autistic Society Scotland, Scottish Autism, Autism Initiatives and the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disabilities (SCLD). Further examples of partnership working are outlined below.

National Autism Mapping Project:
Autism Network Scotland has supported the National Autism Mapping Project by providing contacts, liaising with mapping team and collecting data from focus groups. Ewelina Rydzewska is currently seconded to the Mapping Project in a consultative role, to help with the data analysis and final reporting.

Project Search
As part of the partnership working, Autism Network Scotland is taking part in Project SEARCH, which is an employer-led model for internships for people with disabilities. Autism Network Scotland is setting up the first model for individuals on the autism spectrum in the UK. As part of this process, the Network has developed partnerships with the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disabilities, Glasgow City Council supported employment service, Cardonald College, Glasgow and various departments within the University of Strathclyde, including Human Resources and Estates and Procurements. Network co-ordinator, Emma Hanley currently sits on the steering committee for the project. The Network will also work in partnership with Values into Action Scotland who will provide preliminary training for employers before the start of the transition year. Additionally, the Network will liaise with the University of Aberdeen, who partner the University of Strathclyde in the Action on Autism Research Seminars and host a Project Search site for general disability.

Scottish Autism/National Centre for Autism/ Autism Network Scotland: Education Toolbox
Autism Network Scotland continues to support better the development of the Autism Toolbox as an online interactive website resource. Jayne Porter, Network Advisor currently works 7 hours per week on a consultancy basis to develop toolbox content, consider website structure as well as to source and evaluate useful resources. A further part of this role involves Jayne attending key meetings with Education Scotland and a range of School Establishments to discuss key curricular classroom issues and best practice which informs her work at Autism Network Scotland as well as the development of content for the Toolbox resource.

**Association for Real Change (ARC)**

A partnership has been developed with the Association for Real Change (ARC) based in Edinburgh. The Network has contributed to the ARC’s response to Children and Young People Legislation, as part of the wider transitions forum. Emma Hanley, Network Co-ordinator recently presented to the Transition forum, providing them with the results of the Autism Network Transitions Survey and Learning Event ‘Tackling Transition’ held in June. Emma also sits on the Policy-linking Group which considers different policies, frameworks and legislation in relation to the lifespan and practitioner frameworks.

**Autism Network Scotland Asperger Forum**

In addition to the range of support organisations and service providers, the Network team continues to facilitate the Asperger Forum. The group is chaired by Aline-Wendy Dunlop and supported by the Network Team. Forum members come from across central Scotland representing varying ages and social diversity and have a wide age range. The AS forum has linked to Police Scotland & the ARC Glasgow inviting both to present at a recent meeting updating the group on the Autism Alert Card and providing an opportunity for a targeted Q&A session. The Forum is currently working on the 2nd edition of their 2012 publication ‘An Ordinary Life’.

**Scottish Women with Autism Network (SWAN)**

The Network continues to facilitate SWAN which currently has a group of members from across central Scotland. The group aims to highlight the issues that are specific to women with autism raise awareness and create practical strategies to support women. The group also aims to share information and provide consultation for both policy makers and service providers. SWAN also have a virtual network which is open to women across the country. Recent SWAN initiatives include the development of an autism advice flyer “A guide for health professionals”, promotion of the “Dress for Success” scheme and ....

**University of Strathclyde: University Autism Internship Pilot**
Additionally, the Network is in the process of developing an internship model which is being piloted at the University of Strathclyde. The project aims to support people with autism to access paid employment within the university and transition to further employment following a year-long rotation. Our first intern joined the Network in October, following a period of volunteering with us. She will undertake three rotations of employment during her year with the University. Our second intern began his employment in April, 2013. The Network team work closely with both the intern and host department, to ensure that the individual is supported throughout their rotation and reasonable and appropriate adjustments are made to their working environment. The Network also liaises with employment support services throughout the duration of the internship.

**University of Strathclyde: Student Disability Service**

The Network is working closely with the Student Disability Service within the university. The department is currently hosting a Network intern, who will be supported to collate preliminary information on the experiences of students with autism who attend the university. This information will be used to support future students better, particularly in relation to information and practical support strategies. The project will also help to raise awareness of autism within the university.

d) **Events and Conferences:**

**Website Launch**

On 6th February, 2013, Autism Network Scotland (ANS) hosted an event to launch both the Scottish Strategy for Autism and the ANS websites. The event was held at the University of Strathclyde and was attended by Mrs Jean MacLellan, OBE, of the Scottish Government’s Adult Support Division, Sir Jim McDonald, Principal of the University of Strathclyde, and Donald Christie, Head of the School of Education, as well as representatives of Scotland’s many autism-supporting charities and organisations.

**Autism Network Scotland Learning Event: A Case for Co-ordination**

In March, 2013, Autism Network Scotland worked with the National Autism Mapping Project team to present the first of a series of Learning Events, aimed at gathering opinions and experiences of people working to improve the lives of people with autism around the country. Invitations were sent to community planners and the Association of Directors of Social Work and contacts made through the mapping co-ordinators. Keynote speakers were chosen to provide information about different models of co-ordination relating to autism services; speakers included Annette Pyle of the Scottish Government’s Adult Care & Support Division; Johanna Manikiza, the ASD National Strategic Co-ordinator of Wales; Angela Henderson, the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability’s Head of Policy and Performance; Chris Austin, the Liverpool Asperger’s Team Manager; and Stella MacDonald, ASD Co-ordinator of Fife
Council. All presentations were well-received and provoked enthusiastic discussion of the strengths of each model.

The event was filmed so that the information would be accessible to people throughout Scotland. A specific link was sent to the original invitees and videos of each presentation can now be found on the ANS website, [www.autismnetworkscotland.org.uk](http://www.autismnetworkscotland.org.uk).

**Autism Network Scotland Learning Event: Tackling Transition**

The Autism Network Scotland online Transition Survey (April, 2013) identified a need for more information sharing and collaborative working during periods of transition for people with autism (see appendix 5). In response to these findings we hosted a learning event ‘Tackling Transition’ in June 2013. The event enabled practitioners to come together to problem solve and share experiences with professionals from a wide range of disciplines. The event included presentations from: Gordon McHugh & Barbara Phillips from the Transition Team, South Lanarkshire Council and the Work it Out transition project; Joan Melville & Mary Alexander from Aspire and the Transition Team, Edinburgh Council and Neil MacLeod from the Shirlie Project, Inverness. Following each presentation, delegates were invited to take part in a round table discussion. In addition to highlighting models of transition, we provided an opportunity for practitioners to consider the relevant legislative framework. Round table discussions focused on the *Principles of Good Transitions Planning*, following a presentation from Scott Read, Association for Real Change. Key themes from each discussion were recorded and feedback will be provided to each speaker.

Once again the event was filmed to ensure that people could continue to access the information. A specific link was sent to all members of Autism Network Scotland and each presentation can be found on the Network website.

**Budget**

The Scottish Government Autism Network Grant provides a budget of £500,000 over a three year period. An initial payment of £200,000 was received following contract agreement between the University of Strathclyde and the Scottish Government. After the most recent Scottish Government spending review it was agreed that annual instalments of £100,000 would be paid in each of three financial years: April 2012; April 2013; April 2014. This budget is to provide for all Network activity until the 31st March 2015.

The University Finance Department places budget into 5 streams, the first of which provides for general overheads such as heat, light, telephone, accommodation and repairs. The other four budget streams at the date of this report hold the following balances.

- A = General 15401DK0005A - £1,512.19
- B = Travel 15401DK0005B – £11,943.19
The Network Coordinator has responsibility for the day-to-day management of these budgets and is supported by the Network Administrator.

7) Summary
Autism Network Scotland has made considerable progress over this first year of funding and is steadily revitalising and developing a range of networks for practitioners, parents and carers and individuals on the spectrum. The completion of the website has enabled the network to signpost a wider audience. It has also provided us with a platform to host impartial information about autism, related services and news and events. A shift in technology has enabled the Network to provide regular bulletins and quarterly newsletters, which are sent to an accurate set of contacts. We are now more informed about what happens to our information and the audience it reaches. Such information helps us to tailor the information that we disseminate and shapes our communication channels. In the coming months, the Network will focus on the development and maintenance of online communities of practice, to support and inform the wider autism community better.

We will continue to engage with members and contacts and collate information to help identify gaps in service and highlight areas for targeted information exchange. We aim to do this by conducting regular online surveys and providing members with access to online conferences and workshops. We will continue to support face-to-face networking and knowledge exchange and plan to host a range of learning events focusing on Transition, Employability, the Post Diagnostic Care Pathway and the implementation of the Scottish Strategy for Autism at a local level. Autism Network Scotland has played a significant role in supporting the National Mapping Project and we aim to continue to support local authorities to identify need and begin to implement an autism strategy at a local level (further information can be found in Appendix 2). We have now completed the revitalisation phase of our work and look forward to building the development of the Network towards achieving the agreed funding outcomes and responding to identified need.
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APPENDIX 1: Autism Network Scotland Steering Group Membership

Aline-Wendy Dunlop  Chair, University of Strathclyde
Anna Robinson  Deputy-Chair, University of Strathclyde
Janet Baird  Parent
Kath Baker  Representing people with ASD (SWAN)
Tony Bone  Superintendent of Police
Carolyn Brown  Senior Educational Psychologist, Fife
Liz Catterson  Coordinator ASD Mapping Coordinators
Donald Christie  Head of School of Education, University of Strathclyde
James Grahame  Psychiatrist
Richard Ibbotson  Chief Executive, Autism Initiatives, Scotland
Anne MacDonald  Head of Positive Behaviour Team, Richmond Fellowship (TBC)
Don McKeen  Glasgow City College
John Murray  Grandparent, Businessman
Kabie Brook  Representing Autistic people (ARGH)
Maura Lynch  Depute Director, Scottish Consortium Learning Disability
Alan Somerville  Chief Executive, Scottish Autism

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| 1) Hub               | **Website Development** | 'What is Autism' Consultation July 13
| 3) Signposting       |             | Information gathering Ongoing
|                      |             | Data Analysis/user habits Ongoing |
|                      | **Social Media Strategy** | Twitter feeds Ongoing
|                      |             | Facebook Presence Ongoing
|                      |             | Information/email dissemination ongoing |
| 1) Hub               | **Newsletter** | Quarterly Newsletter ongoing |
| 3) Signposting       |             | Data Analysis |
| 4) Knowledge Exchange| **Database** | Online database development through ALISS Aug 13 |
| 5) TSG Communications|             | |
| 1) Hub               | **ANS Promotional Literature** | Event literature ongoing |
| 2) Gaps in Service   | **Subgroup Representation** | Attend meetings Quarterly
| 3) Signposting       |             | Review meetings Quarterly
| 4) Knowledge Exchange|             | Respond to documentation Quarterly
| 5) TSG Comms         |             | Dissemination of information Quarterly
| 6) Share good practice |          | Sharing of good practice Quarterly
| 7) Network Opportunities |        | Respond to action points Quarterly
| 8) Support Strategy  |             | Review of associated Quarterly |
| 3) Signposting       | **Local Authority Contacts** | Present info on ANS Ongoing
| 4) Knowledge exchange|             | Attend meetings Ongoing
| 5) TSG communication |             | Facilitate focus groups Ongoing
| 6) Share good practice |          | Develop new networks Ongoing
| 8) Support Strategy  |             | Disseminate information Ongoing
|                      |             | Provide updates re: strategy Ongoing
|                      |             | Share good & models of implementation Ongoing |
| 3) Signposting       | **Autism Strategy Website** | Development of e-consultation process with TSG Aug – 13
<p>| 4) Knowledge exchange|             | TSG |
| 5) TSG communication |             | Developing communication pathway with TSG Aug - 13 |
| 6) Share good practice |          | |
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<td>Resource sharing</td>
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<td>8) Support strategy</td>
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<td>4) Knowledge exchange</td>
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<td>7) Network Opportunities</td>
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<td>2) Gaps in service</td>
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<td>1) Hub</td>
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<td><strong>Events:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1) Autism Network Scotland Mapping feedback event: Findings and Recommendations</td>
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<td>2) Employability Event: Showcasing projects from Autism Development Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Autism Network Scotland Learning Event: Tackling Transition in Education</td>
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<td>4) Round table discussions with Highland service providers and families</td>
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<td>Aug -13</td>
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<td>Oct -13</td>
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<td>Strategic Objectives</td>
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### Strategic Objectives

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<td><strong>4) Knowledge Exchange</strong>&lt;br&gt;6) Share good practice&lt;br&gt;2) Gaps in service&lt;br&gt;8) Support strategy**&lt;br&gt;Internship program**&lt;br&gt;Rotation Development&lt;br&gt;Supporting literature&lt;br&gt;Staff training&lt;br&gt;HR contracts&lt;br&gt;Time Sheets&lt;br&gt;Skills Analysis&lt;br&gt;Work plan development&lt;br&gt;Developing exit transition&lt;br&gt;Developing outcomes tool&lt;br&gt;Collecting qualitative data</td>
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### Overview of Autism Network Scotland Network Development

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Network</th>
<th>Stage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>Develop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Sustain</td>
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<td>Literacy</td>
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<td>Further Education</td>
<td>Sustain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Wellbeing</td>
<td>Develop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
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<td>Borders</td>
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<td>Ayrshire</td>
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<td>Lothian</td>
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<td>Audit</td>
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<td>SHARP</td>
<td>Develop</td>
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<td>Employability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inverclyde</td>
<td>Develop</td>
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<td>Highlands and Islands Parent support network</td>
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<td>AS Forum</td>
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<td>SWAN</td>
<td>Sustain</td>
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<tr>
<td>PG Autism UoS</td>
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APPENDIX 3: Autism Network Scotland Website data

Google Analytics data for www.autismnetworkscotland.ac.uk

6th February 2013 – 21st June 2013

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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>% return visits</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX 4: Example of Network News Data

Newsletter sent Apr 24, 2013 at 2:30PM

Sent to 3,622 unique subscribers across 10 lists

Campaign Overview

- **417** Unique opens
  1,745 total opens to date

- **167** Bounced
  4.61% couldn't be delivered

- **3,038** Unopened
  Open rates are only estimates

12.07% of all recipients opened so far

29.5% clicked a link (123 people)

0.26% unsubscribed (9 people)

0 people marked it as spam (0%)

6 shares across Facebook, Twitter & email

Links Clicked

123 people clicked
29.5% click rate.

268 total clicks
Made by 123 people

2.18 clicks per person
Average of all those who clicked.

294 didn’t click
That’s 70.5% of all those who opened.

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<th>Link (URL)</th>
<th>Unique</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<td><a href="http://www.autismnetworkscotland.org.uk/create-art-for-autism-2013/">www.autismnetworkscotland.org.uk/create-art-for-autism-2013/</a></td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link to web-based version of this email</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.autismnetworkscotland.org.uk/swan-this-ones-a-flier/">www.autismnetworkscotland.org.uk/swan-this-ones-a-flier/</a></td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 5: Findings from the Autism Network Scotland Transitions Survey  
(April 2013)

1) **Number of respondents:**

10% were people on the spectrum, 46% were parents/carers, 33% were practitioners working in the field of autism, 2% were family members and 10% were respondents from neither of the above categories.

![Groups of Respondents Diagram](image)

2) **Type of transition of most interest to respondents:**

31% home to school/work transition, 30% children to adult services transition, 28% specified an age range, 27% chose both transitions from primary school to secondary school and secondary school to further/higher education, 24% transition from education to employment, 21% independent living.

![Transition Points Bar Chart](image)
3) **Main areas of interest:**

Socialising, dealing with diagnosis, changes in housing situation (moving home, moving in with a partner or using supported living accommodation), health, family and personal relationships, seeking employment and retiring.

4) **Leading role in transition planning:**

Teachers (50%), social workers (26%), educational psychologist (20%); staggering 40% of respondents stated that none of the professional should play a leading role in planning and instead many respondents said that parents or individuals on the spectrum (48 out of 112 people) should be responsible for planning their own transitions, commented that various professionals should be involved (though it was a multiple choice type of a question) or expressed their disappointment in provided services.

5) **Areas of transition planning perceived by participants as effective include:**

- person-centred approach to transition planning - 150 people (66%)
- good collaborative working between professionals - 141 people (62%)
- good coordination of support between services - 141 people (62%)
- efficient information sharing between services - 124 people (55%)
- accessible and clear information - 123 people (54%)
- consistent and clear transition plans - 120 people (53%)
- opinions of people with ASD included in transition planning - 115 people (51%)
- clear pathways for accessing services - 73 people (32%)
- easy access to resources - 71 people (31%)

☑ clear guidance through legislation - 49 people (22%)
☑ other - 43 people (19%) – both barriers to and examples of effective solutions mentioned

**Examples of good transition included:**
- regular collaboration with parents;
- emotional support for carers, family and partners;
- efficient advocacy services;
- clear and open communication with parents;
- parent commitment to the process;
- early planning involving the individual and their family;
- information on resources and services available in the area;
- partnership between different services and professionals

**Barriers to successful transition included:**
- lack of transition planning;
- its quality depends on an individual key worker;
- insufficient knowledge and experience amongst professionals;
- poor availability of appropriate services;
- some children do not attend school at the age of 16, so the education system cannot lead the transition planning;
- insufficient collaboration between services;
- complex and inconsistent pathways for accessing services;
- more time for preparation and planning
6) **Elements of transition planning and provision perceived as ineffective:**

- not enough knowledge or understanding about autism – 131 people (56%)
- difficulties with accessing services – 111 people (48%)
- difficulties with finding the right type of services – 107 people (46%)
- managing the type of support needed – 104 people (45%)
- changing services at different points of transition – 100 people (43%)
- confusing transition plan – 83 people (36%)
- insufficient information/resources/training materials about autism – 72 people (31%)
- not getting the diagnosis soon enough – 67 people (29%)
- complex and lengthy diagnostic process – 62 people (27%)
- other – 59 people (25%)

**Examples of challenges to successful transition:**
- lack of shared understanding, especially of the impact of transitions or experienced difficulties
- transitions expected to be made ‘quickly’
- commissioners’ lack of knowledge about the complexities of living with ASD
- differing views and perspectives of practitioners can be confusing, the leading professional in transition planning should be in tune with the person in transition
- too much focus on the eligibility criteria and the funding instead of the individual support needs
- misdiagnosis
- protection of vulnerable adults with high-functioning ASD
- unrealistic expectations regarding the support offered
- patchy service provision – lack of consistency
- difficulties in visiting other/suitable establishments
- lack of involvement or interest in early transition planning
- lack of relevant professional multi-disciplinary input and resources or person-centered approach
- poor sharing of information between agencies and poor communication with parents
- not enough training
- insufficient structure for people with ASD when planning their transitions and insufficient support with life skills
- not enough information or support for families post-diagnosis
7) **Accessing information, services and resources:**

Respondents provided a range of open-ended responses amongst which the following aspects were mentioned frequently:

- difficulties with accessing services in rural areas of Scotland;
- the need for creating a comprehensive directory of services and resources;
- the need for offering ongoing support instead of support provided only at crisis points;
- little involvement from social work team;
- the need for tailoring services to individual needs;
- impersonal nature of signposting to services;
- various difficulties with accessing information or services such as lack of clear points of contact, complex processes and pathways, confusing or inaccessible information and poor communication;
- inaccessible trainings sessions for parents due to geographical and time constraints;
- lack of clear transition strategy or ASD specific support/awareness;
- not enough support for the family;
- too much focus on theoretically positive outcomes instead of destinations, which would be truly meaningful and interesting to young people;
- insufficient knowledge and awareness of ASD;
- poor professional conduct and practice;
- the need for early transition planning;
- difficulties with engaging with adult services and persuading them to commit to funding packages;
- lack of college opportunities;
- the need for accurate assessment;
- delayed referrals hinder the transition planning process;
- few suitable alternatives for people who are over 16;
- targeting information to users’ situation by finding ways of identifying requirements in their own situation (e.g. age, particular behaviours or specific needs) would be useful;
- lack of post-diagnostic support for the families;
- insufficient support with pre-school transitions;
- lack of sharing information;
- patchy service provision – lack of consistency;

8) **Main topics of interests linked with transitions:**

- collaborative working and effective use of multi-agency assessment pathways;
- legislation and legal right of people with ASD;
- knowledge and awareness of ASD;
- information on available support, resources, funding and access to services;
- transition plans, practical solutions and ways of involving people with ASD effectively;
- information specific to different points of transition such as transition from home to nursery, primary to secondary school, transition to adult services or independent living;
- bridging the retirement gap;
- assessing housing and benefits;
- different aspects of ASD affecting learning and coping with studying for exams/tests and...
anxiety/stress;
✓ support for parents and young people at an earlier age;
✓ socialising, relationships, independence, organisational skills;
✓ information on career pathways and training for young people with ASD;
✓ handling the transition emotionally;
✓ transition from being single to being in a relationship/getting married;
✓ learning from practitioners working in the area of transitions in other LAs in Scotland;
✓ support for parents when visiting and deciding on educational establishments;
✓ communication between parents and the school staff;
✓ person-centred planning;
✓ improving inter-agency communication;
✓ dyslexia, Meares-Irlen Syndrome and speech and language therapy;
✓ training on dealing with day to day behaviour, change of routine and support/counselling for siblings and parents;
✓ structuring the content and quantity of information given to individuals throughout the transition to facilitate sufficient levels of understanding whilst minimising anxiety;
✓ career support and specialised and marginal employment opportunities;
✓ information on care pathways and main points of contact;
✓ transition from child and adolescent to adult mental health services;
✓ assistance with e-living;
✓ the impact of inappropriately managed transitions;

9) **Interest in attending Autism Network Scotland transition events:**

56% of respondents stated they would be interested, 32% said they might be interested and 8% said they would not be interested. Several respondents mentioned that attending local events would be preferable due to difficulties with travelling.
10) **Face to Face or Virtual Networks?**

The majority of respondents (54%) said they would like to be able to participate in the ANS transitions events both virtually and face-to-face whilst 35% of respondents preferred face-to-face participation and only 9% stated they would like to attend the events only virtually.

![Participation in Events](image)

11) **Preferred method for information dissemination:**

- Autism Network Scotland (ANS) transition events for chosen local areas – 135 people (64%)
- ANS website – 131 people (62%)
- booklets and fact sheets – 129 people (61%)
- email correspondence – 127 people (60%)
- workshops for practitioners – 125 people (60%)
- workshops/groups for teens, adults and relatives together – 113 people (54%)
- Facebook, Twitter or other social networking sites – 73 people (35%)
- workshops/groups for teens and adults only – 53 people (25%)
- other – 21 people (10%)

(e.g. all or a variety of the above; YouTube videos; one stop shops; staff training; variety of workshops; information dissemination to carers projects, third sector agencies providing care, social work services, schools, colleges, health practices and council service points)
Dissemination of Information

- ANS transition events
- ANS website
- Booklets and fact sheets
- Email correspondence
- Workshops for practitioners
APPENDIX 6: Network Development

Education
Autism Network Scotland has continued to gather contacts interested in the redevelopment of the Autism Education Network. Attendance at a number of Education Scotland events and other Education days has increased the range of contacts made and highlighted the possibility for targeting Networks for Early Years, Primary and Secondary. Key documents, information and updates have been sent to all Education Network contacts. A significant proportion of attendees at the Autism Network Scotland Learning Event - Tackling Transition were from Education and a targeted face to face meeting with members is the next step in development. On-going key themes in Education include: the need to share experiences and ideas, and to develop good practice; difficulties surrounding school transitions; how to develop life and employment skills; how to support girls with autism and pupils with autism who have English as an additional language.

Literacy
Discussions with members interested in Education and Criminal Justice has highlighted the need for a Literacy focus group. Further consultation with interested parties is required to evaluate the potential of such a Network and consider how it would sit alongside other groups.

Further Education
Further to its consultation with Scottish Universities, Autism Network Scotland has developed links to college institutions for example Motherwell College, Glasgow College. It has also linked to the College Development Network Scotland. A network with specific focus on Autism was viewed favourably with opportunities to share information and examples of good practice seen as central themes. Autism Network Scotland’s work to develop its connections with a number of disability services within key universities across Scotland is on-going. Connections to college disability services have also been made. Similar themes highlighted by services include: summer transitions into the college/university; transition over the summer holiday; supporting international students with autism, the need for social support and the skills needed for employment/life after study.

Criminal Justice Network:
Evaluation of the old Criminal Justice Network highlighted it had ceased in 2008. Most members of this group had gone on to become part of the ASD Working Group for Glasgow City, which continues to run. Previous members (32 contacts) were contacted by Network Advisers. An evaluation of the Autism Network Scotland Criminal Network yielded a number of key findings including the need for more
autism-specific training and information; need for more data on offenders with autism; the
development of the autism alert card and Autism Information Sharing Partnership; the need to share
experience and develop a platform to discuss examples of good practice.

Further contacts made from attendance of Criminal Justice related events has resulted in an interested
membership list of over 60 contacts including the Chief Inspector of Prisons – Brigadier Hugh Munro,
former counselor Christopher Mason and senior Inspectors from Strathclyde Police. Autism Network
advisers have disseminated information about the Criminal Justice Network to their members detailing
future plans for virtual network development and facilitation.

Autism Network Scotland is now a member of the North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority
Literacy Group and the Association for Real Change (ARC) – Supporting Offenders with Learning
Disabilities Network. Autism Network Scotland has met with the ARC to consider the place of an Autism
specific Criminal Justice network to complement and support their work. Autism Network Scotland has
developed strong links to the Criminal Justice Social Work Development Centre which recently relocated
to the Lord Hope Building at the University of Strathclyde. Most recently Autism Network Scotland has
developed connections with the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research presenting at their
Working Lunch Lecture in June.

**Region specific networks:**

**Borders Network:**

Autism Network Scotland has continued to regularly attend the Borders Autism Strategy Meetings
updating members on Network developments and supporting knowledge exchange. Through contacts
made from this Autism Network Scotland attended a joint meeting with the SPECTRUM Liaison Group
(SLG) and Borders Autism Interest (BAI) Group to discuss the potential redevelopment of a targeted
Borders Autism Network forum. It was agreed by all members that SLG and BAI would join together to
form a Borders forum facilitated by Autism Network Scotland. The new Borders Autism Network group
met on May the 23rd with a range of attendees from Education, Health, Social Work, 3rd Sector
organisation and the local Employment sector. The next face to face meeting will take place on the 18th
of July at which key roles of members will be identified along with the development of group aims and a
solution focussed action plan. Key themes of this Network include: the need to share experiences and
ideas and to share and develop good practice; the need to identify gaps; how to inform existing services
and positively influence practice. Other themes included: post school transitions; adult provision; the
diagnostic pathway; bringing together professionals across the region from a range of disabilities; how
to raise awareness and the delivery of training.
Highlands and Islands Parents Virtual Network

The Highlands and Islands Parents Virtual Network began in June 2013 and comprises parents and carers of people with autism in the Highlands, the Orkney and Shetland Islands and/or the Western Isles. The network provides families across the region with an opportunity to share experiences and to compare and learn about examples of good practice. Fiona Gould from Advocacy Orkney is the chair of the network.

Ayrshire Network:

Some of the key enquiries to our Network have come from residents of South Ayrshire. From this an overview of regional services/support was undertaken by Network Advisers and the Ayrshire Regional Mapping Co-ordinator was consulted in this process. At present there appears to be limited provision for those with an ASC across Ayrshire although the new One Stop Shop in Kilmarnock will develop this. Interest has been received from service users, parents, carers and practitioners on the establishment of a regional Network Group for Ayrshire and support of a virtual forum for the future.

Future developments:

Network advisors identified that Autism Network Scotland did not have any members in the Orkney and Shetland Islands and Western Isles. Preliminary research into service provision in these has identified the need for a range of autism specific services along with a more efficient means of information dissemination and opportunities to share good practice. The Network team continue to gather interest from potential members from a range of professionals in these regions. Moreover, Autism Network Scotland also identified a potential chair of a virtual network for parents residing in the area of islands and the Highlands. Autism Network Scotland plans to facilitate cross collaboration of these virtual networks through the use of a virtual platform.

Social Work Networks:

An evaluation of the Autism Network Scotland Social Work Network yielded a number of key findings including the need for more autism-specific training and information; difficulties surrounding transition into adult services; the need to share experience and develop a platform to discuss examples of good practice. Members also highlighted the need to be able to communicate with other professionals in the field of autism, with a view to improving their own practice. Professionals stated that they would prefer to be able to meet face to face initially so that they could develop a relationship with other network members before being part of a virtual community.
Network advisors have developed a relationship with the Scottish Social Services Council and Association of Directors of Social Work. The latter have proved helpful in disseminating information about the Social Work Network to the registered members of the two organisations, which detailed future plans for virtual network development and facilitation.

Network advisors continue to gather interest from a range of professionals interested in joining this virtual network. Further information regarding the process of reestablishing the network and arranging a meeting will be disseminated in due course.

**Transitions Network:**

Provisional evaluation of the Transition Network has enabled the team to glean information regarding its current status and the role it plays for its members. The Transitions Network has a broad focus and considers transitions across the lifespan of the individual. Members highlighted a number of areas on which they would like to focus. These included: sexual health and relationships; risk behaviours such as self-harming or addictions; transitions through various educational and vocational settings; mental health problems; the diagnostic process and access to ASD-specific services.

The existing members were keen to re-establish links with both each other and Autism Network Scotland. In many instances they have shared the information with their colleagues or have provided contact details to other staff members within their teams. Due to the broad and multidisciplinary nature of the underlying themes of this virtual network, the existing members were also interested in other thematic virtual networks (mental health, higher education, education, social work etc.) or networks for specific geographical areas.

Network advisors continue to gather interest from a range of professionals interested in joining this virtual network. Further information regarding the process of reestablishing the network and arranging a meeting will be disseminated in due course.

**Sexual Health and Relationships Practice Group (SHARP) Network:**

The same evaluation process was duplicated for the existing SHARP network and members identified the following area for future focus: the development of programs and events which discuss sexual health and vulnerability; relationships; strategies to enable individuals to understand their own experiences; understanding boundaries and appropriate behaviours. The existing members were keen to re-establish links with both each other and Autism Network Scotland. In general, members of these virtual networks are also interested in other themes (transitions, higher education, education etc.) or networks for specific geographical areas.
Network advisors continue to gather interest from a range of professionals interested in joining this virtual network. Further information regarding the process of reestablishing the network and arranging a meeting will be disseminated in due course.

**Speech and Language Therapy Networks:**

Autism Network Scotland has met with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists to discuss means of supporting networks of therapists working with people with autism. The RCSLT have an existing special interest group (SIG) which focuses on autism. Currently the SIG is dormant but following discussions, the RSCLT will consider the need for and interest in an ASD SIG. The RCSLT will meet with ANS to discuss their findings.