

We would like to develop a repository of skills / experience which ASD Reference Group members have, in order to ensure that these are adequately covered within the Group to finalise and take forward the Recommendations of the Autism Strategy. Please could you complete and return the short template below:

## **Aline-Wendy Dunlop**

### **1. Academic background / Training**

Aline-Wendy Dunlop trained initially as a primary school teacher, going on to specialise in early years education. During this specialist year she had her first contact with autism: a 4 year old child in her class had been diagnosed with autism by Dr Sula Wolff. The year was 1969. Thus began a career long interest in autism. At that time there were very few opportunities for autism training but through reading, conference attendance and practical experience Aline-Wendy was able to acquire a working knowledge of autism and its educational and family implications. Later through her MEd at Edinburgh University her studies included individual differences, language and communication, social psychology and research methods. Her MEd dissertation was "The Role of the Educational Home Visitor to Children with Special Educational Needs": the case studies included families affected by autism. Her later doctoral studies focused on transitions in mainstream education. Her PhD student supervision includes two studies that focus on educational transitions for children with autism, two studies that are considering aspects of counselling and autism and one that has looked at identification of children with Asperger in mainstream education. In 1996 she set up a working group at University of Strathclyde to develop the Multiprofessional MSc in Autism in partnership with colleagues from the field: including staff of the Scottish Society for Autism and the National Autistic Society. This process offered a continuous cycle of research, preparation for teaching, engagement with pilot students who were professionals from all disciplines, parents and people on the autism spectrum, and evaluation leading to course development. Aline-Wendy has continued to learn about autism through research, reading, conference attendance and working with individuals on the spectrum, their families and the professionals who support them.

### **2. Work Experience**

Aline-Wendy worked in a variety of teaching posts from 1970-1993: in every post she met individuals with autism. As a teacher at the Royal Mile Primary School (then Milton House Primary) in Edinburgh she was associated with the new unit set up there in 1971 specifically for children with autism. Later she worked at Gogarburn Special School and in the 1980s as a home visiting teacher to children with 'special needs' in East Lothian before becoming the head teacher at Westfield Court Nursery School in Edinburgh, which had a unit for children with special needs: this quickly became recognised as a specialist provision for young children with autism – children were fully

included in mainstream with appropriate additional support. In 1993 she was asked to chair a meeting between all of the Scottish charities representing autism – she continued as independent chair of what became Autism Scotland until 1998. In 1993 Aline-Wendy moved to the University sector first in Edinburgh at Moray House Institute of Education and in 1996 at University of Strathclyde where she set up a working group to develop what was to become the Multi-Professional Certificate, Diploma and Masters in Autism: the first students joined the programme in 1998, Aline-Wendy was Course Director from 1998 - 2006. The National Centre for Autism Studies was founded in 2004 and the Scottish Autism Services Network in 2005. Throughout her academic career Aline-Wendy has lectured in autism: first by contributing to the Support for Learning programme at Edinburgh, then as a tutor on the Birmingham Distance Learning Programme, and then on the University of Strathclyde MSc in Autism which is now a well established programme that is offered in three modes: on Campus, in Local Authority areas and through e-learning. Current students come from Scotland, the rest of the UK and internationally.  
[<http://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/courses/education/courses/autism/>]

Aline-Wendy served for a three year period as External Examiner for the University of Birmingham Autism Courses.

In September 2010 Aline-Wendy retired from full-time paid employment at the University and became Emeritus Professor. She coordinates the Scottish Autism Services Network (SASN), the SASN Asperger Forum and a Scottish Government funded Adult Health and Wellbeing Project and is still nominally Lead-Director of the National Centre for Autism Studies.

A major strand of Aline-Wendy's work has been to undertake social research in the field of autism in collaboration with colleagues. Topics have included education and training for autism; social interaction and understanding in autism, a literature review and training frameworks and accreditation. She led the Scottish Autism Services Network Project which ran from 2005-2008 and is sustained by a web presence, a small number of networks and newsletters to the present time. More recently she led on the development and publication of *The Scottish Autism Toolbox*. These projects resulted in *A National Training Framework for Autistic Spectrum Disorders (2004)*; *A Literature Review for Autism (2006)*; *The Developing Social Interaction and Understanding in ASD Pack (2007)*; *The Scottish Autism Services Network* [<http://www.scottishautismnetwork.org.uk/>]; *Policy into Practice Accreditation Report (2009)*, and *The Scottish Autism Toolbox (2009)*.

As grant holder for the Autism Adult Health and Well-being Project, Aline-Wendy is now working on health, well-being, inclusion and inequalities issues, school leaver destinations and a new publication on autism in adulthood in collaboration with the SASN Asperger Forum members and a group of interested professionals. A book project focusing on autism in education in collaboration with Charlene Tait, Alison Leask and Carolyn Brown is in development.

### 3. Strengths

It is never easy to write about strengths in one's own working approach, but it is important to try to recognise the contribution that we can each make. In terms of knowledge and understanding of autism my strongest areas are working in education and training for professionals working in the field of autism; autism guidance; autism in young children; autism across the lifespan; transitions and making use of the many experiences people with autism have shared with me in order to try to make a difference to the lives of individuals on the spectrum.

### 4. Skills

In terms of skills I am interested and experienced in social research; writing about autism; facilitation of developments; chairing; networking and communicating about autism. My work is underpinned by a belief that whilst autism is a complex field some very simple steps can make for a better life for individuals and their families. Throughout my academic career whilst determined to develop professional education, knowledge and understanding I have found there is a need to make strong relationships between theory, research and practice. Increasingly I recognise the need for responsible advocacy for individuals on the autism spectrum, the importance of visibly listening to people's varied experience of living with autism and to try to learn from the individual case to understand how this translates into a better quality of life.

For some time I have been struck by the need for an independent voice in autism - a voice that is not aligned to any particular service provision or employer, but is sufficiently informed to weigh the evidence, to understand different perspectives and to remain impartial/non aligned. This is a principle I have tried to follow throughout my career.

### 5. Indicative Publications and Presentations

Dunlop, A-W (2006) Developing a Scottish Autism Service Network: Lessons from the First Year Understanding Autism- Training Needs and Opportunities for Professionals. *Abstract for a paper presentation at the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Autism Congress, 2006, South Africa*

Dunlop, A-W., Knott, F. and MacKay, T. (2007) Developing Social Interaction and Understanding in High Functioning Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. In Evelyn McGregor, Maria Núñez, Katie Williams, Juan-Carlos Gómez, *An Integrated View of Autism: Perspectives from Neurocognitive, Clinical and Intervention Research..* London: Blackwells. **ISBN:** 9781405156967 (352 pages) (Chapter 13)

Dunlop, A.W.A., Knott, F. & MacKay, T. (2002). *Developing Social Interaction and Understanding in Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders: SEED Innovation Grant Funding in Collaboration with The National Autistic Society.*

Dunlop, A-W, Leask, A, Tait, C and Brown, C. (2010) *Towards an Autism Inclusive Scotland - A national drive for change.* Symposium at the ISEC Conference, Queen's University, Belfast, August 2010.

Dunlop, A.W.A. & MacKay, T. (2004) *A scoping exercise towards the development of a Multidisciplinary CPD resource for Primary Care Professionals in Autistic Spectrum Disorders.* Edinburgh: NHS Education for Scotland

Dunlop, A-W., Tait, C., Leask, A.; Glashan, L., Robinson, A. and Marwick, H. (2009). *The Autism Toolbox, An Autism Resource for Scottish Schools.* Edinburgh: The Scottish Government.

Dunlop, A-W, Tait, C and Robinson, A (2009) *Policy into Practice: Accreditation Project Report. A collaborative autism education and training project.* NCAS and Scottish Society for Autism. Glasgow: University of Strathclyde.

Knott, F. & Dunlop, A-W. (2007) (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) *Developing Social Interaction and Understanding in Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders: A resource pack.* London: The National Autistic Society.

Knott, F., Dunlop, A-W. and MacKay (2006) *How do children and their parents assess their difficulties with social interaction and understanding?* Autism International Journal. 1362-3613(200611)10:6

MacKay, T.A.W.N. & Dunlop, A.W.A. (2004) *The Development of a National Training Framework for Autistic Spectrum Disorders, A Study of Training for Professionals Working in the Field of ASD in Scotland.* Glasgow: National Autistic Society & University of Strathclyde.

MacKay, T., Knott, F. and Dunlop, A-W. (2007) *Developing social interaction and understanding in individuals with autism spectrum disorder: a groupwork intervention.* *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, 32,4, 279-290. DOI – 10.1080/13668250701689280

Marwick, H. & Dunlop, A.W.A. (2005) *A Literature Review of Autism for Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) towards Evaluation of The Educational Provision for Children With Autistic Spectrum Disorders in Scotland.*

Tait, C. & Dunlop, A.W.A. (2005) *The impact of training on practice: insights from postgraduate study of autism.* ISEC Conference 2005, Glasgow.