

# Autism Network Scotland Activity Overview

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Autism Network Scotland continues to work in partnership with a range of individuals, families and organisations to raise awareness of autism, local and national strategies and related resources and activities which have been developed to support good autism practice and help build capacity within mainstream services. Below are examples of activities which have provided opportunities for shared learning and knowledge exchange which have taken an inclusive approach and which have been designed to shape practice, leading to positive outcomes for people with autism and their families.

At the beginning of June, the Network co-hosted the '*Motor Disruption in Autism: Insights for Practice, Intervention and Research*' seminar at The University of Strathclyde. The event saw over 100 researchers, practitioners, parents and people on the spectrum come together to hear about this exciting new field of research. Attendees heard from leading Scottish and international academics and practitioners, who presented findings relating to what is currently known about movement and autism. The event considered the application of this research to practical settings and we are in the process of organising a second seminar which will further support the transition of this research into practice and identify how developments in this area of autism can have a positive impact on daily living and potentially feed into the diagnostic process.

The diagnostic care pathway, and subsequent support, was the focus of a development day hosted by NHS Forth Valley. The Network was invited to discuss Strategy progress at national and local level and provide examples of the various tools and projects designed to support ongoing implementation. Additionally, we facilitated a connection between NHS Forth Valley and the autism community and practitioners were able to hear from an individual about her experiences of the diagnostic process and her perceptions of good autism practice. Following on from this day we are liaising with the Heads of Adult Psychology in Scotland with a view to developing a national event to consider the shape of care pathways at local level and to build capacity within adult learning psychology services.

We have been developing similar collaborative approaches with a range of service providers and the Network was recently invited to work alongside Sense Scotland to support the development of their autism strategy. We worked closely with Sense to deliver a programme to their Joint Operational Group, highlighting national priorities, Working Group activity and tools for implementation. The event provided an opportunity for building an understanding of the needs of people on the autistic spectrum and very much promoted shared learning, prioritising the voice of an individual on the spectrum and a parent's experience of service provision. The day generated discussion around the needs of individuals with complex sensory and communication needs and we will continue to work alongside Sense to develop links with national strategies relating to sensory processing and inclusive communication.

Other examples of inclusive engagement have included a consultation on the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) <<http://www.sign.ac.uk/>> 'patient' booklet for autistic adults, which is designed to explain the clinical guidelines on autism assessment, diagnosis and interventions. The Network hosted an event in partnership with SIGN at the University of Strathclyde which enabled colleagues to receive input from autistic adults on the booklet. Discussions at the workshop were in depth and productive, with most of the focus on language and tone and will enable the SIGN team to make appropriate amendments to the literature.



Good autism practice was the focus of a number of knowledge exchange events which took place during the Engage with Strathclyde week, at the University. The events were aimed at education practitioners and built on themes of good practice identified during the 2015 Scottish Strategy for Autism Annual Conference. Attendees were informed about current relevant resources including the *Autism Toolbox* and the *Principles of Good Transition (2)* and we have established connections with a cohort so that we can examine how such information impacts upon practice. Similar events have been taking place at local authority level, for example the Network was invited to present at an education practitioner development day in South Lanarkshire.

In the coming months the Network will continue to work in partnership to implement a range of strategy-led projects. As part of the ongoing work around transitions, we will be delivering *Autism & Transitions: Understanding Your Role*, in partnership with the Association for Real Change. The team are currently visiting a number of remote and rural locations to embed the Principles of Good Transitions document and develop further understanding of what it takes to support a person with autism through a successful transition. We will be working with NHS Education Scotland to deliver a number of events across Scotland which will focus on building capacity within early years' education settings. In addition, we will be hosting a range of consultation events with individuals, families and practitioners to identify what they perceive as the key supports needed to promote positive sexual health, the information collated will provide the content for an application: Have Fun, Keep Safe, Stay out of Trouble.

