

The Welsh Assembly Government ASD strategic action plan – an overview

The National Autistic Society Cymru (NAS Cymru) is the charity working throughout Wales for people affected by autism. We are part of the UK's leading charity for autism. We were founded in 1962 by a group of parents who were passionate about ensuring a better future for their children. Today across the UK we have over 18000 members and 90 branches. NAS Cymru has seven branches and over 800 members. We also link to a range of independent autism parent support groups.

In Wales, we provide a variety of services and support which may be of help to you or your constituents:

- Information, advice, advocacy, training and support for individuals and their families
- Information and training for health, education and other professionals working with people with autism and their families
- Specialist residential, supported living, outreach and day services for adults
- Out-of-school services for children and young people
- Support and social programmes for adults with autism

A local charity with a national presence, we campaign and lobby for lasting positive change for those affected by autism in Wales and across the rest of the UK.

Autism is a lifelong developmental condition affecting the way people understand and relate to the world around them. With a prevalence rate of 1 in 100, there are around 30,000 people with autism in Wales. Autism is not a mental illness or a learning disability. Autism has its own specific challenges which need specific policy responses at local and national level.

NAS Cymru is proud to be a member-led organisation. We are taking our campaigning lead from the issues raised with us by the autism community in Wales, and are currently undertaking an audit of views and opinions of people affected by autism and other stakeholders in order to inform the future direction of our work and campaigns.

Please help us:

If you are an elected representative, please tell us about the autism-related issues that are raised with you by the constituents you represent, or areas of concern/opportunity that you are aware of.

If you are a person affected by autism, please tell us about the key issues facing you, and how services and support for people with autism need to change in order to better deliver.



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Please email your ideas and comments to Rebecca Evans, NAS Cymru Policy and Public Affairs Officer at rebecca.evans@nas.org.uk, write to NAS Cymru, 6&7 Village Way, Greenmeadow Springs Business Park, Tongwynlais, Cardiff, CF15 7NE, or call 02920 629316.

ASD Strategic Action Plan – Update

The Autism Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan was launched by the Welsh Assembly Government in April 2008. It set out how the Welsh Assembly Government will seek to meet the needs of individuals with ASD and their families and carers.

The Welsh Assembly Government has provided local authorities with funding (£60,000 each in 08/09, and £40,000 each in 09/10) in order to enable delivery of specific key actions:

- identify a named lead who will coordinate work across local agencies, act as a focus for organizations representing children and adults with ASD and user groups, and liaise with regional co-ordinators and the Implementation Support Manager
- form a local stakeholder group including people with ASD and their families/carers who will be encouraged to feed in views and suggestions to the plan
- provide data on the numbers of identified children and adults with ASD locally
- provide data on identified needs of people of all ages with ASD in the local area, and on services for people with ASD across agencies, identifying gaps and shortfalls
- develop an autism action plan to meet local need and demand

These actions should inform how the local authority/authorities in your area deliver for people with autism – particularly by restructuring or re-commissioning existing services and support, and developing new ones where necessary. By now, your constituents should be seeing tangible changes, but progress across local authorities varies considerably. Some have responded well with innovative projects, others have failed to spend their Welsh Assembly Government funding allocation. NAS Cymru has branches across Wales and representatives on many of the stakeholder groups. We can give you their view on delivery on the ground in your local area. NAS Cymru will also be able to advise on how you can use the ASD Strategic Action Plan to support your constituents, and inform you of the local achievements or challenges in the area you represent.

Adult Task and Finish Group


As the ASD Strategic Action Plan focussed mainly on children with ASD, the Welsh Assembly Government set up an Adult Task and Finish Group to explore and make recommendations on a series of priority areas for adults: Diagnosis, Access to Services, Community and Monitoring Support, Employment and Related Issues, and Housing. We have welcomed the publication of the Group's report in January 2010, and the series of recommendations which have been

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accepted by Ministers, and have called for those charged with delivering the recommendations to be properly resourced with time, and access to autism expertise.

In recognition of the scale of the issues facing adults with autism in Wales, the Adult Task and Finish Group will continue to function with the following new key priorities: Further and Higher Education, Transition (including to employment), DWP Welfare Reforms, the Criminal Justice System, and Mental Health. NAS Cymru offers its support to the Welsh Assembly Government as it takes forward this work.



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