

Shetland Islands Council



**Children's
Services**

Autistic Spectrum Disorder Policy for Children and Young People

August 2011

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1.) Definitions of Autism Spectrum Disorder

The *National Autism Society* describes autism as “a lifelong developmental disability that affects the way a person communicates and relates to people around them. People with autism have difficulties with everyday social interaction.”

The Autism Toolbox, a resource on Autism for Scottish Schools, published by the Scottish Government in 2009, gives the following information:

Autism is commonly typified by what is known as the triad of impairments (Wing 1996). These are:

- social communication;
- social interaction; and
- social imagination and flexible thinking.

Asperger’s Syndrome is a form of autism. It is typified by:

- severe and sustained impairment in social interaction;
- restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests and activities; and
- significant impairment in social, occupational or other aspects of functioning.

Other linked conditions

There are other conditions that are considered by some to be part of the wider Autism Spectrum such as Rett’s Syndrome and Childhood Disintegrative Disorder.

Autism as a Context

It should also be noted that Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), more recently called Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), overlaps with other conditions: most commonly this includes Epilepsy, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). There may also be mental health difficulties such as anxieties, phobias and depression. Each of these conditions occur independently of autism, but many people with ASD also present with other conditions – thus autism can be a context for a range of difficulties. This adds to the complexity of meeting each person’s needs appropriately.

2.) National Legislation, Policy and Guidance

This policy is informed by the following, as listed in the Autism Toolkit published by the Scottish Government 2009.

- *The Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc Act 2000*
- *The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001)*

- *Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002*
- *Equality Act 2010*
- *Disability Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2005*
- *The Disability Equality Duty (DED) 2006*
- *Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)*
- *A Curriculum for Excellence*
- *The Early Years Framework*

There are links to these documents on the additional support needs site at www.shetland.gov.uk/education /AdditionalSupportNeeds.asp.

3.) Key Principles:

This Policy:

- Outlines a framework to support children, young people and young adults with ASD.
- Sets out the implementation and development of a continuum of provision.
- Outlines the strategies and priorities for each child, young person and young adult with ASD to reach their potential.
- Clarifies the responsibilities of services within the authority to work collaboratively in order to ensure that the needs of children, young people and young adults with ASD, and their families, are met.
- Clarifies the responsibilities in relation to legislation and government policy that concerns the rights and needs of children, young people and young adults with ASD .

4.) Roles and Responsibilities

Shetland Children's Services:

ASD Friendly Provision – the responsibility of all

All provision for children and young people, **both in and outwith nursery and school settings**, will seek to be ASD friendly by:

- Consulting and working with children, young people and their families when planning and making decisions.
- Helping to develop out of school activities that include provision for children and young people with ASD.
- Raising awareness of disability amongst their peers.
- Recognising the needs of children and young people with ASD in their physical environments.
- Recognising the needs of children and young people with ASD in their social environments and in settings with their peers.

- Ensuring access to the curriculum at a level appropriate to individual needs and strengths.
- Making use of strategies appropriate to individual needs and strengths.
- Using appropriate Information Communications Technology (ICT) and programs to support learning and development.

Line Managers and Head Teachers will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under legislation and local and government policies.
- Ensure that all staff who work with a child or young person with ASD are aware of their needs and strengths.
- Ensure that children and young people with ASD have a named member of staff with whom they can discuss any concerns.
- Make use of the Autism Toolbox and of its resources to inform practice.
- Consult with Outreach Support workers across Children's Services when appropriate.
- Within Children's Services, make use of the local ASD Pathway as outlined in our Managing Inclusion Guidelines policy, and refer and consult with Outreach staff in the Education Psychological Service as appropriate.
- Access continuing professional development opportunities concerned with ASD.
- Ensure successful transitions for pupils with ASD between stages of education, and for young people with ASD moving out of secondary education.
- Ensure efficient planning, evaluation and record keeping, within Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) planning, a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP) or Individualised Education Plan (IEP), if appropriate.
- Make use of the authority's ASD Friendly Schools evaluation document if appropriate.
- Be aware of this policy.
- Identify children and young people with ASD through their use of the ASD Pathway, working collaboratively with Health and Psychological Services.

The Children's Services will:

- Ensure that services and provision for children and young people with ASD in and outwith education are continually developed, and that they are accessible.
- Provide support, advice, information and guidance to children and young people with ASD.
- Provide support, advice, information and guidance to the families of children and young people with ASD.
- Develop integrated services, from within the authority and with the voluntary sector to work in partnership with families.
- Ensure that its staff have access to continuing professional development concerned with ASD.
- Promote awareness and understanding of ASD within the community.
- Encourage the development of ASD friendly practices in their schools.

- Identify processes that promote successful transitions for pupils with ASD between stages of education, and for young people with ASD moving out of secondary education.
- Identify and encourage the development of provision for young people and young adults with ASD moving out of secondary education.

5.) Support within school

In line with the Schools Service Managing Inclusion guidelines, all pupils with ASD have the opportunity to have their needs met within a local mainstream setting or, where appropriate, make use of specialist local or highly specialised national provision.

Support and intervention for children and young people with ASD follows the Stages of Intervention as laid out in the Managing Inclusion guidelines for all pupils with additional support needs. Outreach staff support school staff in meeting the needs of pupils with ASD.

Outreach staff aim to provide an enabling service that supports school staff in developing access to the curriculum and inclusion in school life that is appropriate and relevant to the individual needs of pupils with ASD.

Support may take the form of:

- consultation and advice;
- staff training;
- information-gathering to support ASD diagnostic pathway process;
- liaison with other agencies, and support for school staff to implement advice and recommendations;
- direct work with pupils for an identified need;
- supporting pupil self-awareness, gaining views and supporting pupil involvement; and
- support for parents and families.

For further details please see parents and carers and young people's leaflets about ASD and transition on the additional support needs site at www.shetland.gov.uk/education/AdditionalSupportNeeds.asp

Further information can be requested from the Education Support Officer for Additional Support Needs with the Children's Services at Hayfield House.

6.) Support for parents/carers/families in Shetland

There is provision and support offered to parents, carers and families from birth through to adulthood. Short breaks for children with additional support needs is offered through Children's Services. This includes day care, overnight stays and outreach support for children and young people with substantial additional support needs including those with ASD. The service aims to provide support

to children, young people and their families in a manner that most appropriately meets their needs. All support is offered on the basis of assessed need. (Contact information is given at the end.)

Support is also provided for parents/carers and their children through information-sharing coffee mornings, an Autism Spectrum Family Support Group, and a youth club. Further information can be found at the additional support needs link at:

www.shetland.gov.uk/education/AdditionalSupportNeeds.asp

7.) Key priorities for Shetland's Children's Services

- Use national and local statistics and data to inform future planning and provision for children, young people and young adults with ASD.
- Early identification, assessment and support of ASD using the authority's ASD Pathway.
- Continual Professional Development of their staff.
- To develop ASD friendly schools.
- To offer appropriate support to families of children and young people with ASD.
- Participation of all parents/carers and all children, young people and adults with ASD in planning and decision making.
- Co-ordinating multi-agency services through the ASD Pathway, GIRFEC processes and inter-agency groups.
- Making use of the services of local voluntary organisations.
- Increasing opportunities for activities outwith school for children and young people with ASD.
- Enhanced transitions between schools and out of secondary education for all pupils with a diagnosis of ASD.
- Appropriate authority provision and support offered to all young adults with ASD.
- Appropriate further education and job opportunities for young adults with ASD within the Shetland Isles.

8.) Contact information:

Short Breaks for Children (Education and Families Service)
Phone: 01595 745242/745246

Education Support Officer for Additional Support Needs
(Education and Families Service)
Phone: 01595 744024

Education Psychological Service (Children's Services)
Phone: 01595 745588

Bruce Family Centre
Phone 01595 745401

Learning Disabilities Nurse (NHS)
Phone: 01595 743000 ext 3330

Community Paediatric Nurse (NHS)
Phone: 01595 743000 ext 3362

Disability Shetland
Market House
Phone 01595 743900

Shetland Befriending Scheme
Phone: 01595 743907

Skills Development Scotland
Phone: 01595 695791

9.) Recommended Websites

www.autism.org.uk/signpost, a resource from the National Autistic Society designed to give parents and carers and people with ASD personalised information relevant to their situation

www.nas.org.uk, the National Autistic Society's website, giving details of their services and contact numbers

www.autism-in-scotland.org.uk Information relating to autism with a focus on Scotland