

Autism Accreditation

Specialist Award: The assessment

Assessment



How does the assessment start?



The assessment begins with the service giving a presentation to the consultant. The presentation should describe the service's key approaches that support autistic people in:

- social communication, interactions and relationships
- functional skills and self-reliance
- sensory experiences
- emotional wellbeing.

Personal support documents



The consultant will need to review a sample of person-centred support plans.

- Depending on the size of the provision, a sample will normally be around ten to 15 plans representing a cross-section; for example, from different school year groups, from different residential properties.
- The consultant may ask for additional plans following the initial sample.
- Summative, qualitative and quantitative data can be provided that shows outcomes achieved in relation to autistic people; for example, reduction in the use of physical interventions, summary of survey results conducted with autistic people etc.

If tables and numbers are shared please summarise what they show in a few simple sentences.

Observation of practice



The assessment team will undertake a series of planned observations. Observations of practice will provide the strongest evidence of what is happening in a service.

- The purpose of observing practice is to identify how well autistic people are supported in relation to social communication and interaction, flexibility of thought, sensory issues and behaviour.
- Observations will cover each site included in the registration; eg, each residential home, the main school as well as the early years provision etc.
- Observations will cover a range of activities typical of those offered to autistic people on a normal day.
- Each autistic person present during the assessment should be observed being supported individually or as part of a group.
- Any significant exclusion of a site or cohort of autistic people should be discussed with the consultant and approved, ahead of the assessment.

Staff interviews



Interviews can be conducted face to face, virtually or over the phone. The service will need to timetable interviews with:

- staff who work directly with autistic people to find out what training and support they have received. This could include recently inducted staff as well as those responsible for mentoring or training their colleagues
- staff responsible for delivering particular methods or approaches. For example, therapists or behaviour support co-ordinators
- staff with particular responsibilities for assessing, setting targets and monitoring progress for individual autistic people.

Interviews



- There is limited time to carry out interviews so be selective and think about who would be best informed to answer key questions.
- Staff can be interviewed individually or in small groups.
- Discuss with the consultant the feasibility of interviewing autistic people.
- The service can ask the consultant whether interviews with relatives/carers or advocates should be arranged.
- People being interviewed over video should not record the interview. However, the consultant may wish to record the session to help them write the report. Recordings will only be used to write the report, stored securely and deleted after the report has been written.

Safeguarding autistic people



- Consultants and moderators have professional expertise in the field of autism and are DBS checked. However, they should not be asked to carry out regulated activities as defined by the Disclosure and Barring Service, should not be left alone with a child or vulnerable adult or asked to give specific, detailed advice on how to support an individual.
- Accreditation is not a safeguarding authority and will not investigate a safeguarding concern or an allegation against a member of staff as this could jeopardise a subsequent investigation by the local authority or the police.
- If abusive practice is directly observed by a representative of Accreditation during an assessment then it will be referenced in the assessment report and will impact what level of award is given. It will also be reported to the designated safeguarding lead and, when considered necessary, directly referred to the appropriate authorities.

Safeguarding autistic people



- In keeping with our framework of best practice, we expect provisions to employ behaviour support methods which are proactive, preventative and non-restrictive. We would only expect to see restrictive physical intervention used in emergency circumstances and under strict controls. Where this is not the case, restrictive interventions may be considered a safeguarding concern.
- While our assessments focus on autism-specific approaches, we expect that such approaches are delivered within the context of a service meeting statutory expectations regarding the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. For this reason, the assessment findings are triangulated with survey results and the outcome of the most recent statutory inspection.