

# Inclusion Award Community programmes

An introduction to Autism Accreditation

# About Autism Accreditation



Autism Accreditation mission statement:

- We work to ensure that society works for autistic people.
- We set the standard for best autism practice and provide frameworks across all sectors to develop supportive environments and cultures that produce positive quality of life outcomes for autistic people.
- We are seen as the experts on autism practice and our kitemark acts to reassure autistic people and families of the standard of support they should expect to receive from providers.

# Inclusion Award



## Community Programmes:

- The award is intended for community programmes that are not specialist services for autistic people but enable autistic people to take part in meaningful and enjoyable social activities, for example related to leisure, recreational or sports activity.
- We recognise that those who deliver these programmes are required to directly support autistic people in one-to-one situations or as part of a small group, sometimes over extended periods of time.
- The Inclusion Award standards help community programmes in addressing the specific barriers that autistic people often experience when accessing information and services.

# Inclusion Award standards

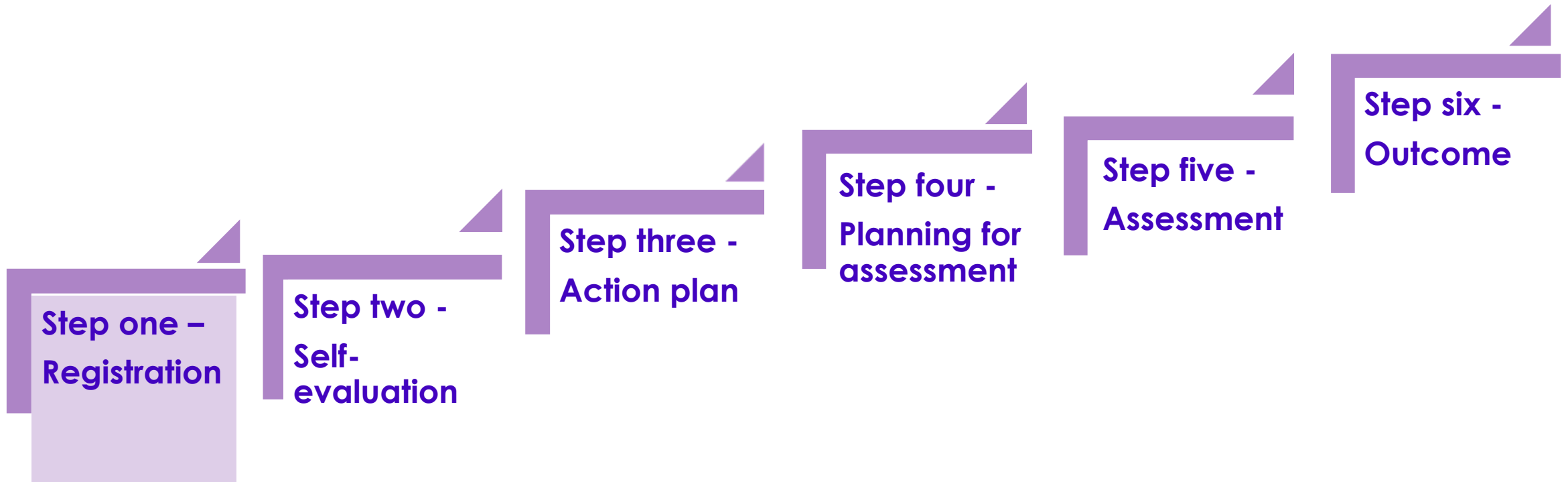


By using the standards, teams can:

- identify what they are already doing well and where more work may be needed
- create an action plan to ensure staff are receiving adequate training and reasonable adjustments are in place for autistic people
- improve outcomes for autistic people
- support provisions in meeting their *Equality Act* duties
- provide evidence of good autism practice in order to achieve the National Autistic Society Inclusion Award.

# Step one

Complete a registration form to join the programme.



# Registration



What happens next:

- After registering with autism accreditation the service is allocated an autism consultant.
- The service completes a self-assessment audit.
- It is advised that the provision identifies staff to work together, forming a Quality Action Group (QAG)

# The standards



The standards are divided into four topics:

- understanding autism
- making our service accessible for autistic people
- providing personalised support
- working in partnership in the best interests of autistic people.

# Quality Action Group (QAG)



Set up a QAG to meet regularly to work on the self-evaluation and action plan.

The QAG should ideally include representation from different departments and levels of management and could include autistic people or other stakeholders.

- Try to think of ways to engage all staff in the process. For example, running a staff workshop where people work in small groups to address specific areas using an appreciative feedback approach (see the next page)
- This will provide insight into whether there is a shared understanding and where there may be gaps and inconsistencies.
- Staff could identify things that are happening in the provision that you have overlooked or are unaware of.

# Appreciative enquiry approach



We recommend that you use an appreciative enquiry approach to complete the self-evaluation.

## **Discovery stage: The best of what is**

Identify the activities or events that have worked really well and share success stories.

## **Dream stage: What might be**

Next, imagine what it would be like if the positive features that were identified in the discovery stage were embedded as everyday practice.

## **Design stage: How can it be**

Identify steps that can help make the dream a reality.

## **Delivery stage: What will be**

Create and implement an action plan.

# Step two

Complete a self-audit and score how well the service is doing at meeting each indicator by using the rating scale.



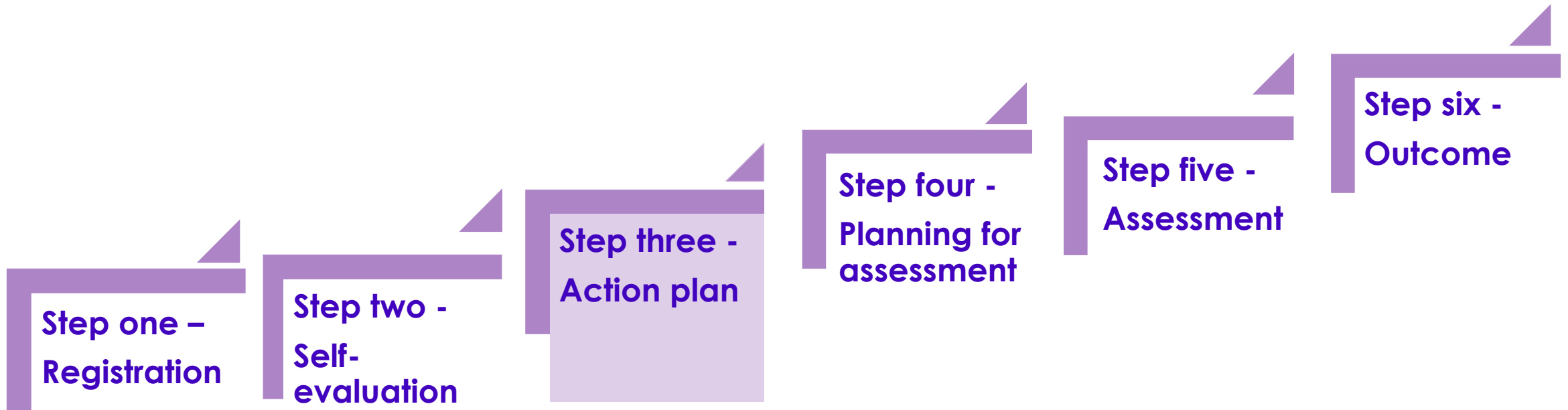
# Self-evaluation



- Carry out a comprehensive and detailed review of current practice using the self-audit.
- Implement an accreditation action plan based on the self-evaluation.
- Optional quality development sessions can be held with an autism consultant.

# Step three

Create an action plan to address the areas identified from the self-audit.



# Creating an action plan



As you work through the self-evaluation, you are likely to identify action points.

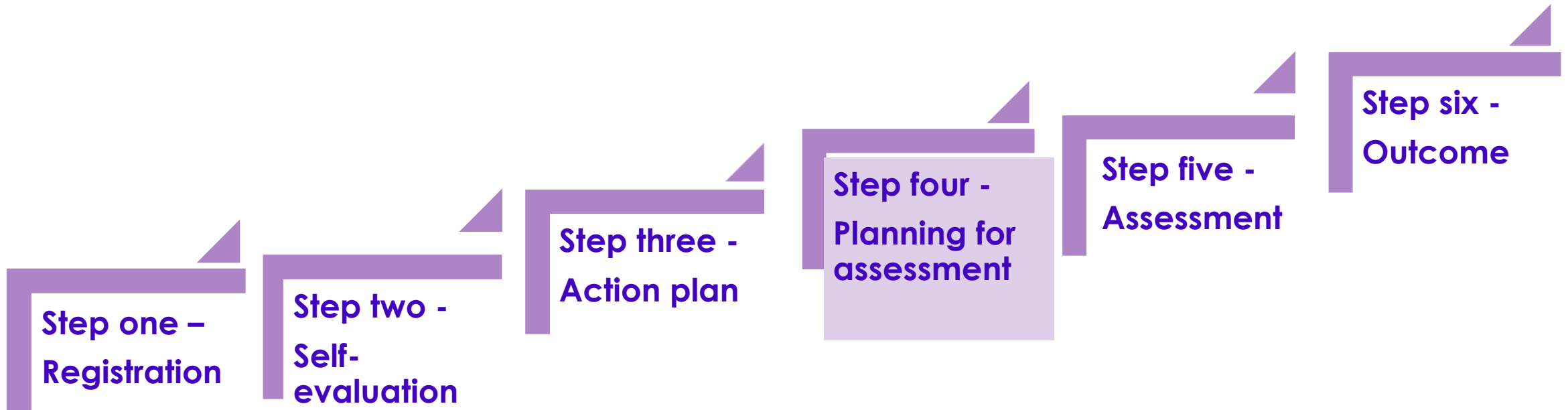
We suggest you group these as:

- priorities - what must be done before the assessment
- back burner - not essential but would be good if actioned
- quick wins - tasks that are relatively easy to carry out and can give a sense of progress.

An action plan template is provided or services can use their own version.

# Step four

Contact the autism consultant to book a date for assessment. Please allow six months' notice to ensure availability.



# Planning for assessment



Allowing **six months'** notice to ensure availability:

- Contact the autism consultant to plan the date for assessment.
- The consultant will share a link to a confidential survey to be shared with autistic people and their families.

**Two weeks** before the assessment, submit a portfolio of evidence including:

- the completed audit and action plan
- individual case studies (maximum of three)
- working documents to support case studies.

# Case studies

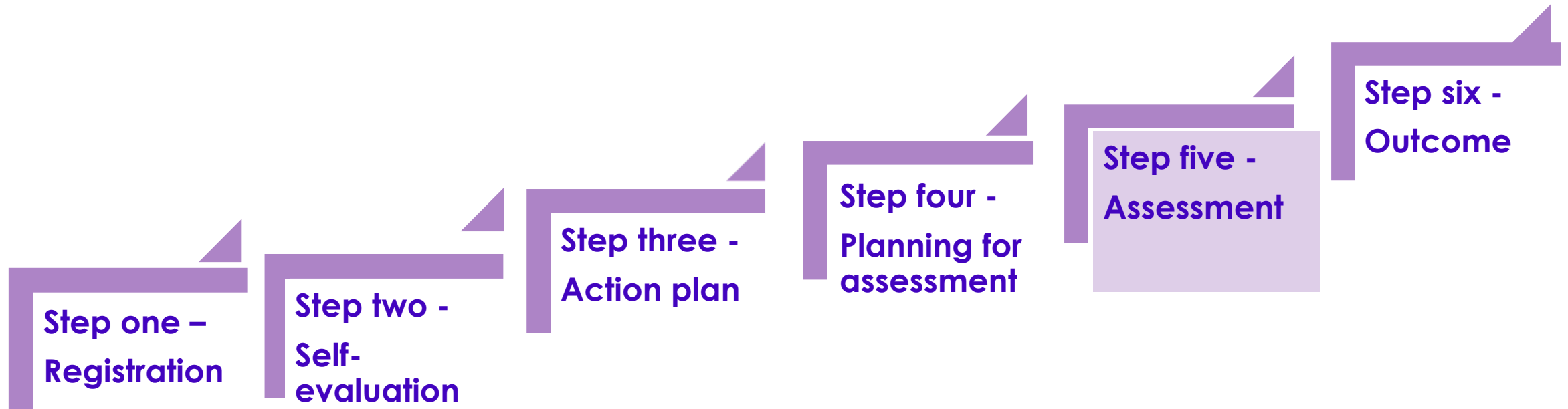


Each case study should include:

- Brief description of the individual's skills and challenges experienced
- What reasonable adjustments have been made?
- What additional support has been provided?
- What outcomes have been achieved?
- Any other relevant information.

# Step five

The assessment will be conducted on Microsoft Teams.



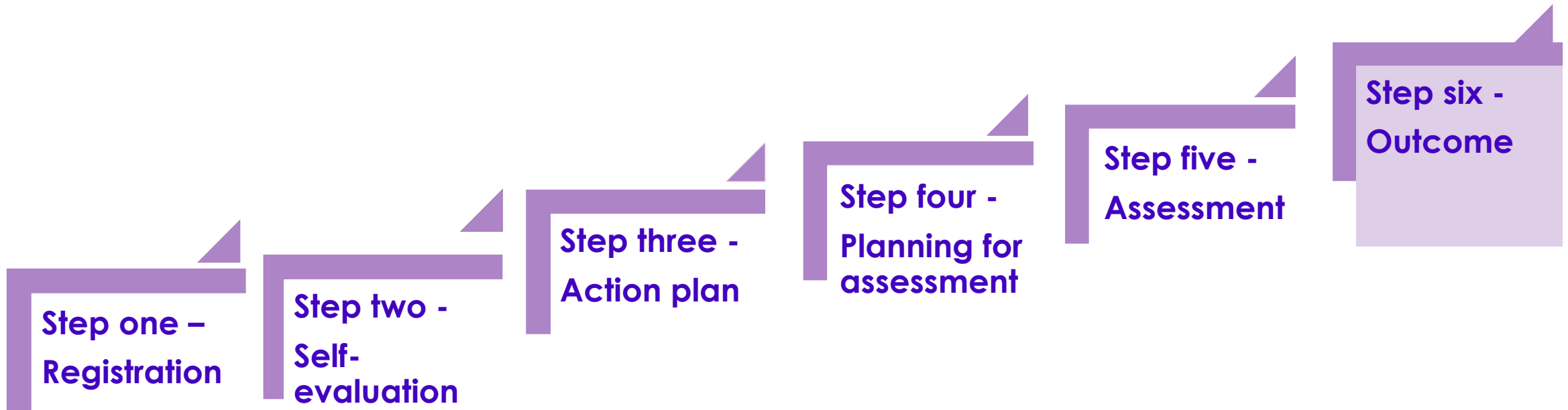
# Assessment

The day of the assessment:

- The assessor will review the application and associated supporting evidence.
- They will interview the key person in the service with responsibility for developing inclusive systems and processes.
- The service can also nominate up to three other staff members who can provide useful insight into how the provision ensures inclusion for autistic people.
- Where appropriate, interviews, through a confidential video link, should also be conducted with autistic individuals.
- Consideration will also be given to the outcome of the surveys and documentary evidence provided.

# Step six

Within a month of the assessment, the service is notified by email of the assessment outcome.



# Assessment outcome



- The correspondence following assessment will outline what the service is doing well and where further developments could be made.
- This will be followed up by a certificate and access to the Inclusion Award Quality Mark.
- The National Autistic Society reserves the right to withhold the award if a provision has been identified by an appropriate inspectorate as not meeting statutory requirements with regards to safeguarding practices.
- It is recommended that services are assessed every three years to ensure that good standards are maintained and the award can be recognised as reflecting current practice.

# Getting support



In the first instance, refer to the Autism Accreditation Inclusion Award framework. This contains information that will answer most questions related to the accreditation and assessment process.

Services can access autism consultant support by emailing the consultant with a question, at any point in the process. There is no additional cost for accessing general consultant support, providing the demands placed on them, in terms of time or resources, do not become excessive. If the consultant believes this is the case, they will advise that you book a consultant session.

# Getting support

<b>Consultation session (on site)</b>	<b>Consultation session (virtual)</b>
<p>The visit could involve one or more of the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• meeting to provide bespoke advice, review and feedback on the self-audit and action plan</li><li>• review and feedback on personal support plan documentation and assessment tools</li><li>• environmental audit or learning walk of your provision</li><li>• focused observations of current practice.</li></ul>	<p>If the service needs bespoke advice and guidance on the self-audit, you may prefer to ask for support via a virtual meeting.</p> <p>Your autism consultant should be able to arrange this at an earlier date than a site visit.</p>

# Members' area



- The members' area on our website contains links to the most recent versions of our standards documents, application forms and key supporting documents for all of our awards.
- The area also contains signposts to other areas of our website aimed at supporting the development of autism practice.
- Additionally a *Quartet of Differences* document is available in our members' area which contains up-to-date research articles and additional information about a range of autism-specific, evidenced-based approaches.