

Inclusion Award - Mainstream schools

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



Mainstream Inclusion Award:

- This award was designed to help improve the educational experiences of autistic young people and children in mainstream schools.
- It provides a tool to identify, celebrate and share best practice in helping autistic pupils experience positive outcomes academically, socially and in terms of their overall emotional wellbeing.
- The award is based on the eight principles of Good Autism Practice in including autistic pupils in mainstream schools, identified by the Autism Education Trust (AET).
- The principles were developed from an examination of the current evidence from research and practice, as well as key policies and perspectives and insights of autistic individuals (Guldberg et al., 2019)

The principles

The AET Eight GAP Principles

This is how the Eight Principles of Good Autism Practice are embedded in the four themes.



Principle one:

- Understanding the strengths, interests and challenges of each autistic child

Principle two:

- Enabling the autistic child to contribute to and influence decisions

Principle three:

- Collaboration with parents and carers and other professionals and services

The principles

The AET Eight GAP Principles

This is how the Eight Principles of Good Autism Practice are embedded in the four themes.



Principle four:

- Workforce development related to good autism practice

Principle five:

- Leadership and management that promotes and embeds good autism practice

Principle six:

- An ethos and environment that fosters social inclusion autistic children

The principles

The AET Eight GAP Principles

This is how the Eight Principles of Good Autism Practice are embedded in the four themes.



Principle seven:

- Targeted support and measuring the progress of autistic children

Principle eight:

- Adapting the curriculum, teaching and learning to promote wellbeing and success for autistic children.

Achieving the award



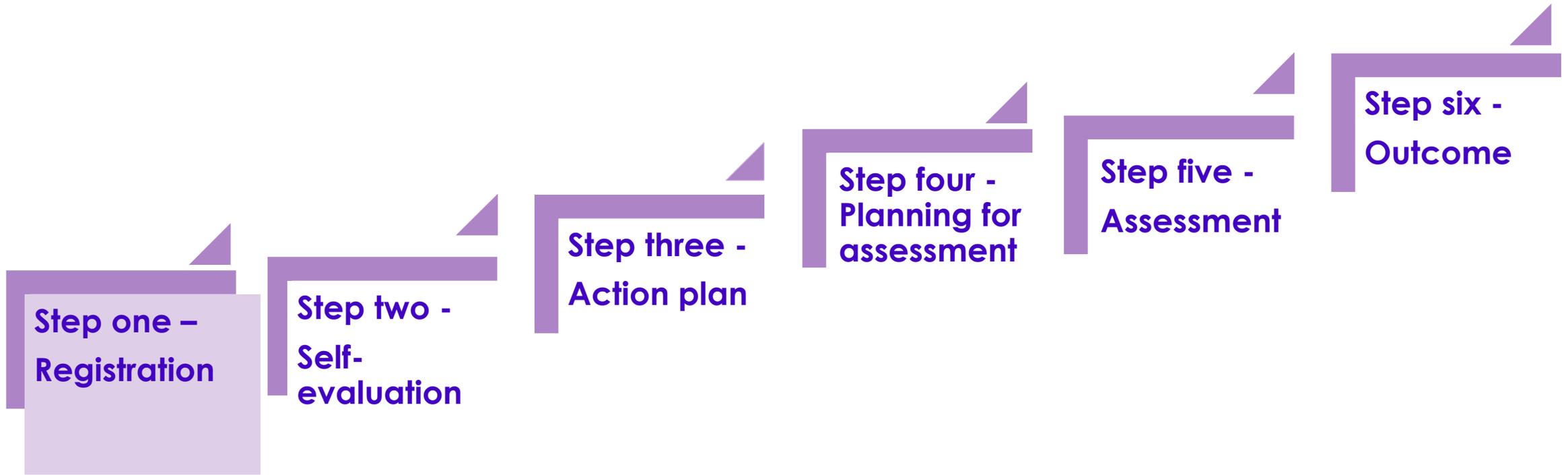
In order to achieve an award, you will need to show how you have implemented these key principles in practice by completing the AET self-audit.

You will also need to provide evidence of positive outcomes achieved by individual young people as a result. You will need to demonstrate this through:

- individual case studies
- a survey of parents/carers and in secondary schools and post-16 provisions, a survey of the young people themselves
- interviews with staff who can talk about the young people they have worked with, the person-centred approaches they have employed and the outcomes achieved.

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.
- We advise that the provision identifies staff to work together, forming a Quality Action Group (QAG).

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 pupils 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 using the Autism Education Trust framework.



Self-evaluation

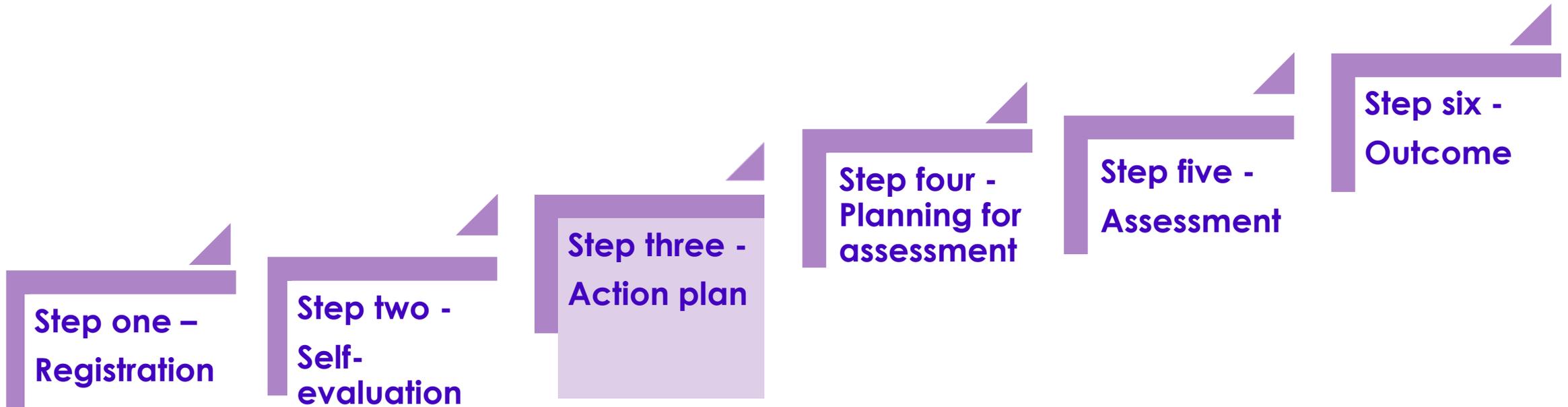


- Carry out a comprehensive and detailed review of current practice using the AET self-evaluation tool.
- Implement an accreditation action plan based on the self-evaluation.
- Optional quality development sessions can be held with an autism consultant.

[Framework Documents | Autism Education Trust](#)

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

Write an action plan that includes specified time frames and nominated team members who will lead on addressing the actions. 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.

A free action plan template is available on the AET website. We recommend you include time frames and nominated team members who will lead on addressing the actions

As a rough guide, once 75% of the standards are recognised as being done 'really well', the school should book an assessment.

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 learners and their families.

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

- the completed AET audit and action plan
- the completed application form
- individual case studies (four for Early Years and primary settings and eight for secondary schools).

Case studies

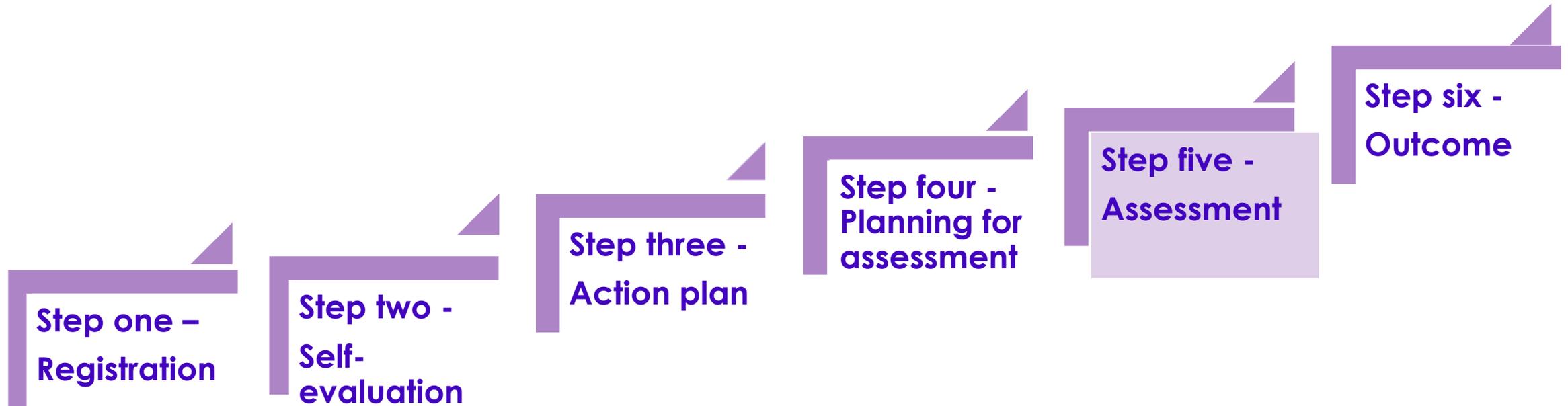


Each case study should include:

- summary page (see *appendix 2* in *Autism Inclusion Award Application for Mainstream Schools*)
- pen picture, communication passport, student profile etc. which highlights the pupil's personal strengths, interests and challenges and the best way to support them
- most recent Individual Education Plan (or equivalent) showing what provision has been put in place to enable the pupil to achieve identified outcomes
- examples of resources used with the pupil where appropriate eg Social Stories, photograph of a visual timetable
- evidence of achieved outcomes.

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 school with responsibility for overseeing special educational provision.
- The school can also nominate up to three other staff members who can provide useful insight into the provision for autistic children and young people.
- Where appropriate, interviews should also be conducted with autistic pupils themselves. This could be done on a one-to-one basis or as a small group. Interviews will be conducted through a confidential video link.

Step six

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



Assessment outcome



- Within a month of the assessment, the school will receive a letter confirming if the award has been achieved and identifying what the school 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 Ofsted as not meeting statutory requirements with regards to safeguarding practices.
- It is recommended that schools are assessed every three years to ensure that good standards are maintained and the award will be recognised as reflecting current practice.

Support



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

For further advice, email your identified Autism Accreditation Consultant. There is no additional cost for accessing general consultant support, providing the demands you are placing 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 in a consultant session.

Members' area



- The members' area 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 within our members' area which contains up-to-date research articles and additional information about a range of autism-specific, evidenced-based approaches.