

Autism Accreditation

Specialist Award: Preparing for your
assessment

When will the assessment be?



Plan the date for assessment with the consultant when you think you are ready. If this is the first assessment, the consultant can help determine readiness for it.

Once the assessment dates are agreed, the service will receive a confirmation email from the Accreditation Customer Relations team and will be invoiced any outstanding fees, which need to be settled at least four months before the assessment.

- The service must give the consultant at least six months' notice of their preferred dates.
- To maintain the validity of the award, it is recommend that services have an assessment every three years.

What is the purpose of assessment?



The assessment helps services to identify what they are doing well and what could be improved in terms of how autistic people are supported. It also provides evidence for our committee to give the service an award at Aspiring, Accredited or Advanced level.

The process of assessment includes:

- Determining if working practices are aligned to the Autism Accreditation standards
- considering if the assessment outcome criteria have been met.

The provision is responsible for notifying Accreditation of any safeguarding concerns or adverse media attention, which could be considered relevant to awarding Accredited status.

What key questions will be considered?

- What key approaches are used to develop autistic people's social communication and self-reliance, to address sensory issues and promote emotional regulation and wellbeing?
- How well do staff implement and personalise these approaches when working with autistic people?
- How are person-centred support plans created and reviewed?
- What outcomes do autistic people achieve with the support offered to them?
- What do those who are supported think about how well staff work with them and understand their autism?

Preparing for assessment



What evidence will be required?

- individual support plans and case studies
- interviews with staff and where appropriate autistic people supported by the provision
- online survey of autistic people supported by the provision and/or the family member representing their best interests
- observation of practice where appropriate and possible.

The consultant will need to review a sample of person-centred support plans. They can do this while visiting the service, although to reduce time spent on site, we ask they be shared electronically.

What paperwork do I need to return before the assessment?



Three weeks before the assessment, the service should return:

- the Specialist Award manual with the self-audit, action plan and (optional) the case studies completed.
- key policy documents related to the provision for autistic people (max. of five)
- visitor guidance; for example, dress code, documentation required, lunchtime arrangements etc
- service prospectus or brochure.

Please do not expect the consultant to consider lots of paperwork. Be selective or provide a summary of key points from documents, otherwise documents may be left unread and important evidence could be missed.

How are the views of autistic people considered?



Accreditation expects to see evidence that autistic people are actively involved in their support plans and their views are sought and acted upon. This is commented on in all reports.

In addition, as part of the Autism Accreditation assessment, we send the service a link to confidential surveys. These links should be sent out to autistic people and, where relevant, to relatives, carers or advocates who represent their best interests.

Adults over the age of 16:	Requirement unless the provision has determined that they lack the capacity to understand and respond to the survey even with reasonable adjustments in place.
Young people of secondary age (11-16):	Recommended and considered good practice unless they lack the capacity to engage in the survey even with reasonable adjustments in place.
Children of primary age (below 11):	Discretionary
Relatives/carers/advocates who represent the best interests of individual:	Requirement unless the autistic person is over 16, has capacity and does not wish their views to be represented by others.

It is your responsibility to make sure the links are made available to anyone entitled to take part.

Reasonable adjustments?



Reasonable adjustments should be made to support an individual in completing the survey so they are not disadvantaged because of their autism or another disability.

There are two versions of the autistic person survey. Where an individual has learning disabilities, the easy read version is likely to be most appropriate but you can discuss this with your consultant.

Examples of reasonable adjustments:

- The survey questions could be read out to the individual and their spoken responses recorded on the survey for them.
- The survey could be copied and presented in a format that the individual finds more accessible; for example, large print, symbols etc.
- Augmentative or alternative communication systems could be used to present questions and get responses.

Pre-assessment support



The autism consultant will offer a pre-assessment session at least a month before the assessment, either as a visit or a virtual meeting.

- At the pre-assessment meeting, the consultant will discuss what should be included in the assessment timetable; for example, what will be observed and who will be interviewed.
- The service will plan an assessment timetable which should be sent to the consultant in a draft format at least a week before the assessment. (The consultant may ask to make some changes.)
- As far as possible, planned observations should provide insight into the range of activities typically offered by the provision.

Canceling or postponing an assessment



If the service needs to postpone or cancel the assessment, let the consultant know as soon as possible.

- Subject to the terms of cancellation set out in the terms and conditions, there will be no reimbursement of fees paid should the provision cancel an assessment date.
- Refer to the cancellation and postponement policy for further details.