

Autism Accreditation

An introduction to the programme

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 in autism practice and our kitemark acts to reassure autistic people and families of the standard of support they should expect to receive from providers.

About Autism Accreditation



Our aims:

Set the standard for best autism practice:

Working with autistic people, families and professionals, we use the latest research to inform the standards set.

Sustainable:

We provide a programme of development and resources that can be maintained and built upon year after year.

International kitemark:

Our kitemark is recognised as a sign of best autism practice by autistic people, families and professionals. It offers assurance that the services provided by the organisation are of the highest quality.

Reach:

To ensure that all sectors are targeted to provide best practice across the board, our awards and frameworks are tailored to organisation types.

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Pre-assessment:



Pre-assessment



After registering with Autism Accreditation the service works towards an assessment. This involves:

- carrying out a comprehensive and detailed review of current practice using the self-audit tool.
- implementing an accreditation action plan based on the self-audit
- optional quality development sessions can be held with an autism consultant
- having an assessment meeting with your consultant to plan the format of your assessment and what to expect
- booking an assessment, giving six months' notice.

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Assessment:



Assessment



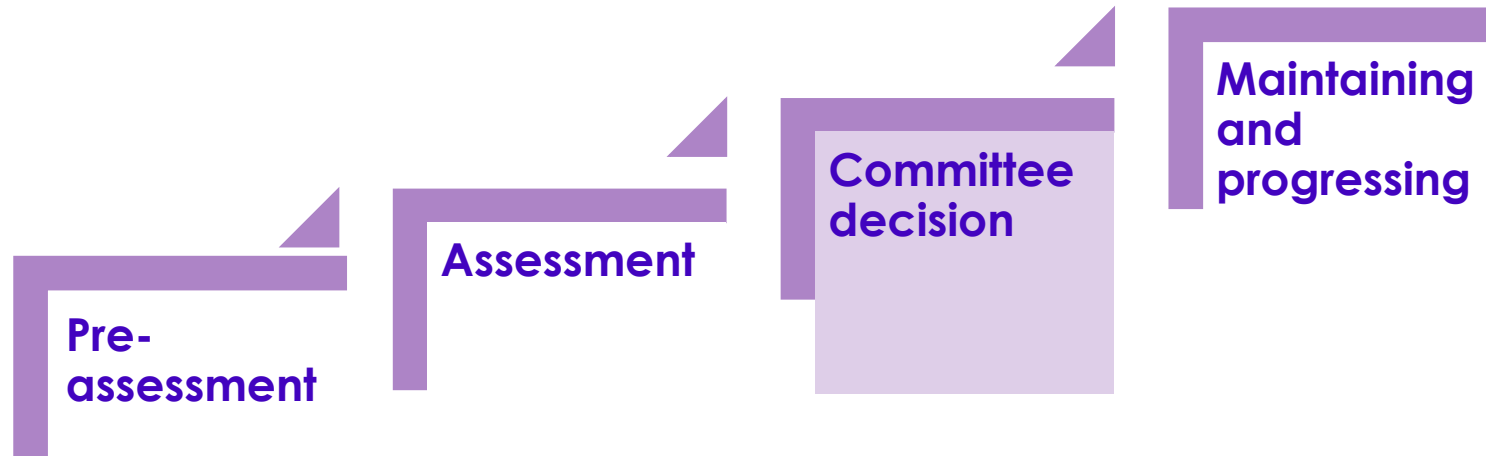
After a period of time, having conducted a self-audit and addressed any relevant actions, the assessment takes place:

- An online accreditation survey is sent to families and/or autistic people.
- Assessment days include observation of practice, oversight of key person-centred documentation and discussions with key people within the provision (including autistic people where relevant).
- Observations may also be undertaken by an independent moderator.
- A report summary of assessment findings and areas of strength and development is produced by the consultant and sent to the awarding body.

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Committee decision:



Committee decision



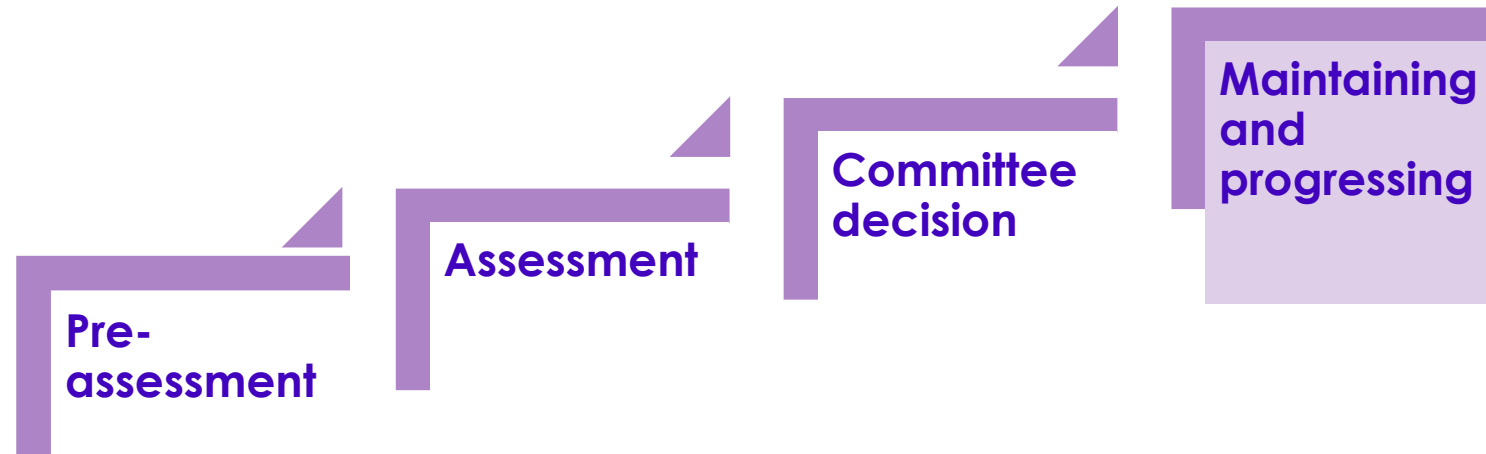
The committee considers the assessment report and supporting information, and notifies the service of the award given:

- **Aspiring** – the provision has made good progress towards meeting the standards but with inconsistencies and a need for further developments.
- **Accredited** – the provision is overall meeting the standards and is providing good support for autistic people with only minor areas for development.
- **Advanced** - provisions which have met all of the standards to achieve Accreditation with a high level of quality and consistency.

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Maintaining and progressing:

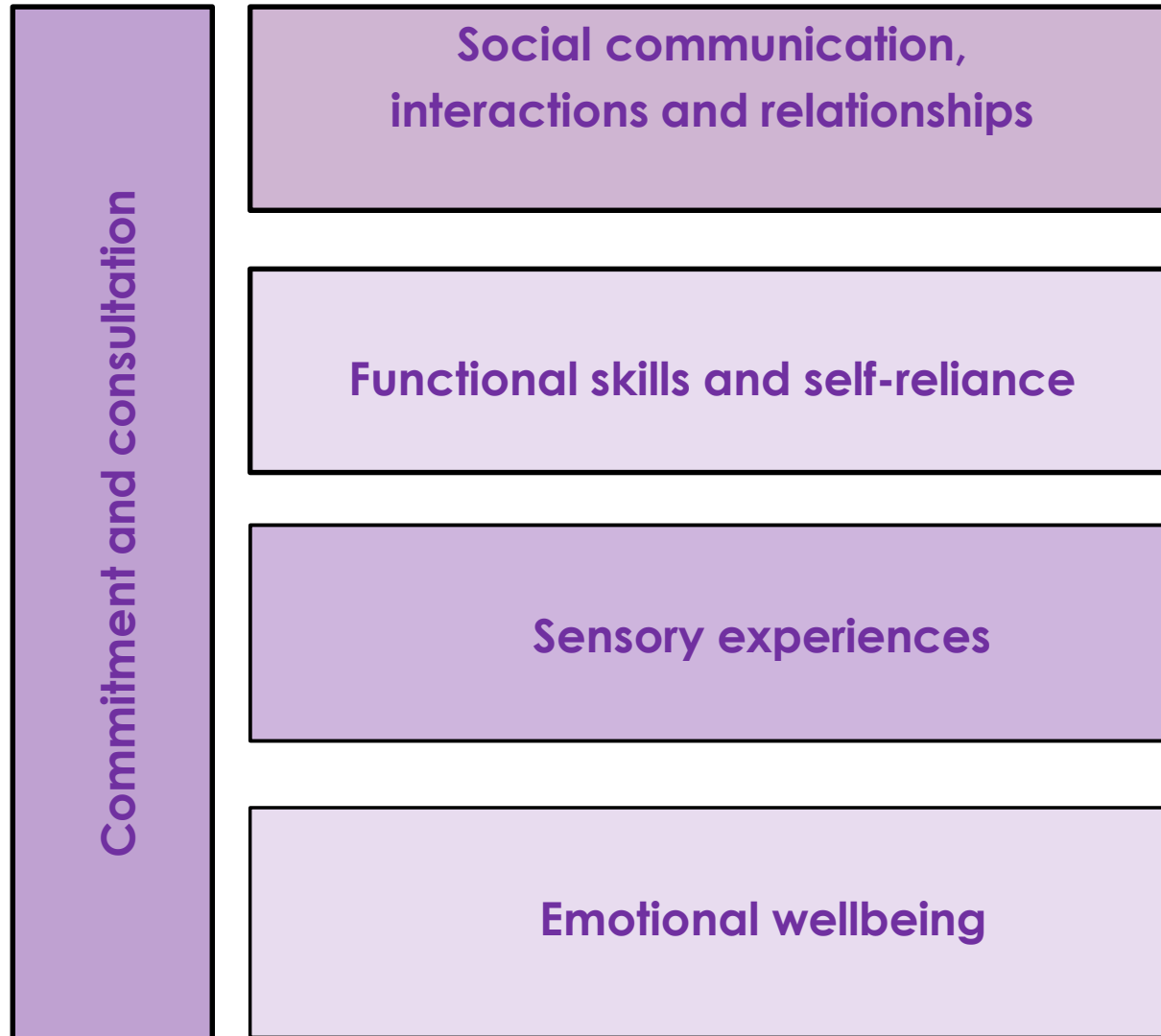


Maintenance and progression



- Provisions are offered a new assessment plan if they wish to stay in the programme after an assessment has been completed.
- They can continue to access support from an autism consultant and work on areas of development identified from their assessment.
- Further assessment can be planned to demonstrate that the service is maintaining the standards or has progressed to the next level. We recommend this occurs within three years to ensure that the award can be considered a meaningful reflection of current practice.

Self-audit tool



The audit tool is based on our framework of best practice and is divided into five topics.

Quartet of difference



Social communication, interactions and relationships; Functional skills and self-reliance; Sensory experiences; Emotional wellbeing

- The quartet of difference relates to the core areas where autistic people most frequently experience differences when compared to the majority of people.
- These differences can present as a combination of skills and strengths as well as challenges, particularly where such differences are not accommodated.
- Each area is broken down into a series of indicators. For each of these indicators, you are required to say what you do to address it and to give a rating score.

Quality Action Group (QAG)



Set up a QAG to meet regularly to work on the self-audit 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 enquiry approach. (See a description of this on 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 happening in the service that you have overlooked or are unaware of.

Appreciative enquiry approach



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

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.

Creating an action plan



Work through the self-audit to recognise what is working well and to identify action points.

We suggest these are grouped 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.

In the self-audit tool, we include a simple pro-forma for an action plan but you may wish to create your own or incorporate it into an existing development plan.

Getting support



Access support by emailing the consultant with a question, at any point in the process.

The consultant can advise on the accreditation process and provide general advice about good autism practice.

There is no additional cost for accessing general consultant support, providing the demands you are placing on them, in terms of time or resources, does not become excessive. If the consultant believes this is the case, they will advise that you book a consultant session.

Getting support

Consultation session (on site)	Consultation session (virtual)
<p>The visit could involve one or more of the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• meeting to provide bespoke advice, review and feedback on the self-audit and action plan• review and feedback on personal support plan documentation and assessment tools• environmental audit or learning walk of your provision• focused observations of current practice.	<p>If the service needs bespoke advice and guidance on the self-audit, you might prefer to ask your consultant to provide support via a virtual meeting. Your 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 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 information about a range of autism-specific, evidenced based-approaches.