



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
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Autistic Spectrum Disorders

A Guide for Criminal Justice System Practitioners in Wales

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What Are Autism Spectrum Disorders?

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are diagnosed when a child or adult has impairments in social interaction and social communication together with impaired social imagination and a narrow repetitive pattern of activities and interests. The term 'autism spectrum disorder' is a broad term that refers to the subgroups known as Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD). These subgroups include Childhood Autism, Asperger syndrome, and other autism spectrum disorders, all of which are defined by the World Health Organisation's international Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders. Research evidence indicates that 1 in 100 individuals have an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) in the UK. It is believed that within Wales today there are approximately 27,000 people with an autistic spectrum disorder. Diagnosis involves a comprehensive assessment by an experienced team of clinicians that usually includes a detailed interview with the parent, specific psychological and language assessments and clinical observations.

Referral for assessment and diagnosis enables the individual to access the most suitable support and advice and evidence shows that suitable support and early intervention provides the best outcomes for individuals with ASD. It is also important to be aware that ASD is commonly found together with other medical conditions, both physical and mental.

Although population estimates show that Autistic Spectrum Disorders are relatively common, they are under diagnosed in the current population, especially in adulthood. In addition some individuals may have particular signs of ASD without necessarily having the full syndrome of ASD that would result in a diagnosis. It is therefore important to have an awareness of the signs of the disorder as many of the people the criminal justice system come into contact with may not be aware that this is why they are experiencing difficulties. The content of this package is designed to provide an insight into autistic spectrum disorders for professionals working within the various areas of the Criminal Justice System within Wales.

Impact of ASD in everyday life and implications for the Criminal Justice System (CJS)

The difficulties individuals with an ASD have with social interaction, verbal and non verbal communication and rigidity of thought will impact on their everyday living. Things that are taken for granted by most people can cause great difficulties for individuals on the spectrum and make life very stressful at times.

Difficulties in Social Communication

As we form relationships with families, friends and others, there are a number of things we take for granted. We learn to detect mood and appreciate that using a particular tone of voice has an implied meaning. For individuals with ASD this can be a complicated process. Luke Jackson (2002) says how difficult it can sometimes be to understand what is required when an emphasis on just one word in a sentence can alter its meaning quite dramatically. Here is his example:

- I can't do that... implies I can't but maybe someone else can.
- I **can't** do that... implies it is not possible.
- I can't do **that**... implies I can't do that, but may be able to do something else.

Our mood is often reflected in our body language. A frown and eyes down can mean we are unhappy without us having to tell someone. If we are listening to someone with ASD talking about a topic of particular interest and we are feeling bored or frustrated loss of eye contact, huffing, puffing and moving away will not end the conversation! Individuals with an ASD can often miss our subtle body signals. Idioms are used regularly by us in everyday language e.g 'Let's paint the town red', 'I am going to knock some sense into you.' Phrases such as these can be confusing to individuals with ASD who take things very literally and may lead to troublesome, unexpected behaviour.

Case Study:

Mr E got into trouble on the prison wing because he acted literally on a sarcastic comment made by an officer, who told him 'Why don't you go and ask everybody'; so he did! Staff said he was 'refusing to listen' and was 'annoying staff by repeating the same question to everybody' which they construed as an attempt at manipulative behaviour rather than a literal interpretation of a throw-away line. Failure to understand irony often causes problems as (some) staff find it amusing that the individual will take a comment at face value.

Difficulties in Social Relationships

Such difficulties can lead to feelings of isolation and even depression. Some individuals with an ASD can have mental health issues. Strategies of how to make and maintain friendships may need to be learned especially as, on the surface, some individuals can be considered insensitive or egocentric. Individuals with ASD can be very honest - they like to tell it as it is and can often cause offence without being aware. They can also find it very difficult to understand how to react to other people's feelings and can respond in an inappropriate way in a sensitive situation e.g. a funeral. Sometime their inappropriate behaviour in a public place can get them into serious trouble and their desire to make friends can mean they get into the wrong crowd.

Rigidity of thought and Special Interests

Many 'special interests can be quite harmless e.g, stamp collecting, whilst others can be potentially hazardous. A youngster with a fascination for fire might be capable of making fire bombs and throwing them out of the window or setting alight a neighbour's property. We recently heard of a young man who had been accused of downloading pornography from the internet. To him the material was not pornographic or sexual-he just liked to look at pictures of the human body.

The 'activity' the bodies were engaged in was completely lost on him. It is important therefore to look at special interests in a wider context. The obvious examples are of course fire, water, poisons and weapons but other less obvious special interests may also warrant a closer examination e.g a strong liking for pulling electronic equipment apart and putting it back together again is fine if the equipment does not belong to someone else!

Insistence on rules and routines

People with ASD like structure in their lives and respond very well to rules and routines. They find it very difficult to cope with sudden changes in their daily routine. This can have an impact on issues relating to criminal justice system procedures and will be discussed in more detail later on in the booklet.

'I have a need for order, therefore I constantly feel compelled to arrange and order my clothes, furniture, tableware and so on. If things are not in their right place, I may find it difficult to know what to do next, move into the next part of a conversation, work out the next part or aspect of a procedure and so on.'

Wendy Lawson (2001, p.77)

Transfer of skills

Skills learnt in one situation are not automatically transferred/generalized to another similar situation. This transfer of skills can also apply to social interaction as Darius (in Sainsbury, 2000) explains:

'I only recognise people if I see them in the same context and they wear the same clothes. It takes many years before I learn to recognise people in more than one situation or with different clothes. Even then meeting them in an unexpected situation/ place will result in blank stares from me because I don't recognise them.' (p.82).

Meltdown

Individuals with ASDs might be highly sensitive to certain sensory experiences and this in turn can sometimes lead to what might appear as an aggressive outburst. Sensory overload-or indeed social stress leading to extreme unusual behaviour is referred to as 'Melt Down'. Melt Down may result in behaviour that could appear like a temper tantrum in younger children or anti-social behaviour in older people. Sometimes it can manifest itself in uncontrollable crying. An individual experiencing Melt Down could also appear to the public as someone who is on drugs or has had too much alcohol. Sometimes when individuals are under a great deal of stress they may cover their ears and rock back and forth - or even flap their hands wildly.

'Sensory overload was a daily thing - sights, sounds, emotions, lights and touch were all experienced intensely and I was easily overwhelmed by what to others would seem like the simplest task... So periodically, at home and at school, the stress would build up and I would explode. Classic case of the straw that broke the camel's back.' Karen (in Sainsbury 2000, p.120)

Under such circumstances, it is important for members of the public to remain calm and speak softly using direct short sentences. It is not wise to stand too close, approach from behind or touch the person with ASD. Some people with ASD liken 'Melt Down' to having an epileptic fit-once it starts it must run its course. But afterwards the person needs to recover in quiet, safe surroundings away from others.

If the person you know or work with experiences such difficulties when confronted with particular sounds, sights, smells etc try to avoid exposing them to these and teach them strategies that might help them alleviate their stress e.g. using stress balls, having things 'to twiddle' or fiddle with.

Some Typical Crimes

Offending Behaviour

Sometimes individuals with ASDs might come into contact with the CJS because of the nature of their social difficulties, their trusting and open personality, their particular 'special interests' or their sensitivity to sensory experiences.

Howlin (2006) states that individuals with ASDs might be particularly vulnerable to crime for the following reasons:

- A fascination or 'special interest' could be fatal e.g. fire or poison. She cites the example of a young man who had such a interest in washing machines that he would break into shops and people's houses to examine them!
- A strong dislike such as the sound of a baby crying or a dog barking could lead to an aggressive outburst;
- A lack of knowledge of appropriate and inappropriate touch could lead to accusations of sexual harassment. Individuals may love the feel of a particular texture or material such as velvet and think nothing of stroking the back of the lady in front of them if she happens to be wearing a velvet jacket.
- Unexpected violence and outbursts provoked by certain triggers in the environment that are not directly evident
- A pre-occupation/adoration for an individual could lead to stalking.
- Activities appropriate in childhood can be perceived as inappropriate in adulthood e.g. picking up or tickling toddlers that belong to complete strangers.

Allen (2006) adds to this a vulnerability to get involved in computer crime, property destruction, drug offences and theft.

We asked some teachers of youngsters with ASDs what they considered to be some of the major issues. They expressed concerns around the fact that behaviours tolerated in childhood have different connotations in adulthood e.g. touching, asking inappropriate, highly personal questions, pushing into people and

not apologising and temper tantrums/outbursts in public places. One teacher expressed concern over the fact that the youngsters can sometimes be provocative and confrontational.

Another mentioned the vulnerability of individuals with ASDs to be coerced by neurotypicals into crimes such as petty theft and property destruction.

Davis and Schnunick (2002, pp.45-46) argue that individuals with ASDs might come into contact with the police for the following reasons:

- Self stimulatory and self- injurious behaviour such as hand flapping, pinching self, self-biting, repetitive actions and thrashing.
- Wandering alone e.g. children dressed inappropriately for the weather wandering alone or darting into traffic. (Here they do point out that some children with ASDs are attracted to water and may therefore be especially at risk near pools, ponds and lakes).
- Peering into windows.
- Turning water faucets on and off.
- Behaviour may mimic drug abuse or mental illness.
- Bizarre or disruptive behaviour such as lining up objects, Pica (eating inappropriate objects), toe walking, robotic like speech.
- Hitting or biting people.
- Involvement in altercations e.g. they may commit a crime without realising what they have done wrong.
- Suspected child abuse-parents may be restraining child with what may appear questionable force.

Anti-social Behaviour

Sometimes the problems may be exacerbated following a crime because of perceived anti social behaviour of the individual with

ASD. For example, in a situation that involved interaction with a police officer they could:

- behave in an extremely socially inappropriate way;
- cause offence without being aware they are doing so;
- appear aloof, rude, egocentric or insensitive;
- not know how to react to certain unknown situations and other people's feelings;
- have difficulty understanding and using non-verbal communication;
- not like being touched;
- have extreme intolerance to certain sounds and smells or other sensory stimuli;
- take things literally or
- not be able to understand implied meaning or follow a long set of instructions.

We spoke to a group of youngsters about their experiences with the police. Some of them had found themselves in situations where their social communication had led to misunderstandings. For example, one young man said 'I have been in trouble and they (the police) thought I was being cheeky but I was just being honest. When asked by a police officer 'Do you promise never to do this again?'. One young man had answered 'No I do not know if I will ever do it again'. In his mind, he did not want to make a promise that he truly did not know if he would be able to keep. Another, when asked if he had been involved in a shop lifting incident answered 'Yes'. He had not committed the crime but he had been in the shop at the time when the incident occurred. His interpretation of the word 'involved' was very different from that of the police officer. In short therefore individuals with an ASD may appear to be behaving in an uncooperative way when actually they are trying to be as open and honest as they can be.

Criminal Intent

'Do not take misbehaviour personally. The high functioning person with autism is not manipulative. Usually misbehaviour is the result of efforts to survive experiences which may be confusing, disorientating or frightening.' Wendy Lawson (2001, p.162)

Neurotypicals i.e. people who NOT have an ASD will use emotion, facial expressions and have direct conversation with you.

They are not repetitive. An individual with ASD when asked if he has stolen something may answer - yes, yes, yes... because he thinks that is the response he should give. Alternatively, if the individual answers - no, no, no and starts flapping his hands or rocking there is a need to think very carefully in terms of handling the situation.

Unlike individuals with an ASD, neurotypicals may not have a fight or flight look. They may try very hard to look innocent.

They may be lucid and responsive. If you should ask an individual with an ASD - 'What happened?' - he might turn away, start twiddling his fingers or hand flapping. And the more you ask, the more the actions will escalate.

Individuals with an ASD sometimes comply with requests to please and make friends. They can be easily manipulated. For example, they may get involved with drug dealing because they see it as a way of having friends without thinking about or realising the consequences of their actions. Professionals need to assess whether the person with ASD understands that they have committed a crime. Sometimes, a person with ASD will not realise that their behaviour is illegal. Conversely, an individual with ASD may not understand that a crime against them such as robbery or rape has been committed.

'Another cringe worthy memory is how effortlessly I could be manipulated and consequently how my peers would wound me up for their own comedic purposes. It wasn't exactly difficult to get me to humiliate myself, because I was provoked by the most trivial of things.' Nita Jackson (2002, p.25)

And so, although it is very important that professionals within the criminal justice system should be aware of issues relating to ASDs, it must be noted that this does not necessarily mean that we are suggesting that individuals with ASDs are more likely to be involved in crime than the general population. And if they are, there may not be any 'real' criminal intent. This is a crucial issue for consideration.

Media reports in the UK and abroad can also choose to focus on crime and ASDs because it provides a more sensational news item than if the crime had been committed by a 'neurotypical'. It is important that those working and living with individuals with ASDs recognise their vulnerability and provide them with the guidance and support they need to avoid contact with the CJS.

Interviewing Victims and Witness

Due to the differences in how an individual with autism processes the world around them and interacts with it, and others, it is essential that the CJS professional develops skills which will enable them to effectively interact with the individual with autism. It is imperative to the CJS professional that whether they are dealing with the individual on the spectrum as a victim, witness, suspect or convicted offender that the information that they are collecting is as comprehensive and accurate as it is possible. In order to achieve this aim it is important to make, and allow the individual with ASD to feel as calm and safe as reasonably possible. Many individuals will find changes to routine extremely distressing, so an unplanned interview with the police or a solicitor will not necessarily be conducive to obtaining the required information for the CJS professional.

The sooner it can be established by the CJS professional that they are dealing with an individual on the autistic spectrum, the easier it will be for them to conduct their interactions in such a way as to remove barriers which might inhibit a productive interview.

The Police when initiating the arrest of a suspect with autism may find themselves in the particularly difficult situation of trying to ascertain the events around an incident from an individual in a heightened state of anxiety. Extra support should be sought by the police in such situations, whether by contacting an appropriate adult or the notification of a family member or a friend. The input of a family member or a friend can be especially important for the Police, as they can give an insight into the individual, their diagnosis, and how best to relate to them.

The individual may have a high level of verbal communication skills, however this may mask the true level of understanding that they have of the situation and setting they are in. It may be the case that the CJS professional should alter the level at which they pitch their verbal interactions, ensuring that they speak in short clear, unambiguous sentences. Once a question has been asked allow the interviewee extra time to respond. A delay in answering a question is not an indication of guilt or the individual trying to withhold information, it is often the case that individuals on the spectrum will require extra time to break down what has been said to them and then construct how best to reply. Premature repetition of questions may lead to confusion and also leave the individual feeling more anxious, in what will already be an anxiety provoking situation.

It is advisable that any meetings/ interviews are highly structured and planned in advance. It is further advisable that meetings are cut into a series of short blocks with breaks frequently being taken. Any information that can be obtained from professionals or people personally associated with the individual will enable the organisation of the session in a bespoke way which is conducive to achieving best results for the individual and CJS professional.

At the start of each interview, it is advisable to prepare the individual by clearly explaining what the intended outcomes of the meeting are. If further meetings are to be scheduled, advance notice of what their purpose is and what will be discussed will be beneficial to many on the spectrum. If regular

meetings are to take place then it may be advisable to set a regular time and day of the week for them. This will offer stability and predictability for the individual and may result in increased attendance, and provide a solid starting point from which to work. If possible avoid cancelling / rearranging appointments, changes to routine or unpredictable events will see many on the spectrum become anxious and this in turn may have the effect of decreasing the effectiveness of any subsequent meetings. If a meeting needs to be cancelled/ rearranged ensure that good advance notice is provided, with an alternate date / time offered.

As already discussed many on the spectrum may display expressive language that is in advance of their receptive language skills. If possible it may be helpful to supplement interactions with pictorial aids. For example, rather than ask someone if they had seen an individual with short dark hair, brown eyes, of a medium build wearing, a black jumper and blue jeans they could be shown a picture and asked the question, 'Have you seen this man?' asked instead. The individual is more likely to be able to accurately answer a question when it is taken from being abstract, to being shown something tangible which can act as an aid memoir and assist in a concrete answer.

Written communications should be kept simple and brief. As with verbal communication, written communication should be free from acronyms or abbreviations and only the information that is necessary should be included. Following the model outlined within the Department of Health document 'Positive Practice Outcomes' (p.34) written communications should be set in a clear font at 14 pitch with 21 point line spacing. An extra line should be added between paragraphs to clearly separate them. Text should be left aligned with a ragged edge on the right.

- Keep language, clear, calm, short and directive.
- Keep your voice neutral. Avoid raising your voice or using language that may be construed as provocative.
- Keep facial and hand gestures to a minimum.

- Address the individual by name, if known, at the start of every sentence.
- Always allow extra time for the individual to process the request that has been made of them. Repeating the request too soon may lead to confusion and delay or prohibit the response that is desired.
- Avoid speaking hypothetically, making jokes or employing sarcasm. Many people on the spectrum will take what is said to them very literally.
- Do not touch the individual if this can be avoided. Many people on the spectrum find touch an unpleasant or even painful sensation.
- If possible, use visual aids or written instructions to reinforce what is being said / is expected of the individual. It is commonly accepted that many on the spectrum are visual thinkers, that is to say, people who process information visually rather than verbally.
- Always keep the individual informed of what is happening. If a date for a further meeting / hearing is to be set, inform them of this as soon as possible.
- Give warning as to what will be discussed dealt with at every stage, including in advance of further contact where possible.
- Do not change times/ dates for future meetings/ hearings if at all possible. When this does happen, give good advance notice.
- Avoid using acronyms and abbreviations when talking to the individual.

Case Study Examples:

- Mr A got very upset when his appointment was changed at short notice.
- Mr B had real difficulty expressing a view from another's perspective during a group offending behaviour programme. Facilitators initially thought he was being obstructive and uncooperative.
- Mr C kept making inappropriate comments to the interviewer. In a programme however, he seemed to have a good recognition of his problems - at least could verbalise these - but had significant difficulty addressing them (i.e. converting abstract 'instructions' into concrete behaviour).
- Mr C additionally struggled with the generation of alternatives, tending to favour often his first thought and wanting to stick with that.
- Mr D thought the interviewer 'liked him' in a romantic way because she smiled at him.

A note about video identification Parades

If you have been a victim of a crime or have seen the face of someone committing an offence then you may be asked to view a Video Identification Parade.

A Video Identification Parade is a short DVD film which is viewed on a television screen or on a laptop computer. The film is approximately 3 minutes in length and contains a series of head and shoulder video clips. These video clips are made up of the person the Police believe committed an offence and a number of volunteer images who have a similar appearance to the suspect.

Each person on the parade appears in front of a similar background. Under normal circumstances each person turns their head from left to right in the same manner so that no one stands out for any reason other than their appearance. On some

occasions a special treatment may be applied to these images to disguise or replicate an identifiable feature. For example, a mosaic may be placed over an area of the face or neck to obscure a feature. This will be applied to every person in the parade to ensure the parade is fair. Alternatively, in some cases features from the suspect such as tattoos and scars may be replicated onto each volunteer image in a similar manner.

In England and Wales a video identification parade normally consists of nine moving images. This includes the suspect and eight people with a similar appearance as outlined by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

The Identification procedure allows a witness to view video recordings of a suspect in a controlled environment and make a positive identification without seeing the suspect in person.

In some cases the identification procedure can be conducted in places which are not the police station, these have included hospitals (where a victim has been injured or is unwell) and a persons home when the victim or witness may have a disability, for example which means that they cannot go to a Police station or if they feel vulnerable or intimidated. In such cases there are certain rules, similar to what happens at the police Station, that need to be followed such as filming the procedure. It is really important to know that you can speak to your identification officer, who may or may not be a police officer, and discuss any concerns that you may have.

For the person with an ASD - this could be useful because they often tend to be visual learners. However, it must be noted that some people with an ASD tell us that sometimes they do not recognise people by their facial features and find it hard to identify people out of a particular context. And so, for some this procedure could work well but for others it may confuse the issue. (See the quotation from Darius in Section 1, p. 7)

More information can be found at:

www.viper.police.uk/index.html

www.videolineup.com

Challenging Circumstances

Misunderstandings in different situations can lead to confrontation. For example, when a ticket collector on the train asked a young man 'Can I see your ticket?' and he answered 'No', a major incident ensued and the Metropolitan Police were called. The young man had placed his ticket in his jacket pocket and was answering, as he thought in a truthful way. The ticket had been placed out of sight and so the ticket collector could not see it!

In dealings with individuals with an ASD, it is important to try and see things from their perspective and avoid unnecessary confrontation. It is important to realise that there is a difference between the escalated behaviour in ASD and the escalated behaviour of drugs or alcohol. Restrain or arrest should only be used as a last resort.

These are just two examples of situations where conflict could arise and how this might be defused.

Custody

Individuals with ASD can not cope with change and have a great fear of the unknown. They may have an attachment to a certain object which is their comforter and may not take too kindly to this object being taken away from them. They can sometimes be unaware of health and safety issues and are therefore extremely vulnerable in this situation. What can you do?

- Be aware of lighting, smells etc in the building that could escalate unwanted behaviour and lead to Melt Down.
- Let the individual keep the objects he has been carrying if they are safe. This will avoid unnecessary confrontation.
- Do not bombard the individual with lots of questions.
- Provide visual clues/cues of all procedures if possible.

Routine Traffic Stops

When a person with ASD travels in a car, he/she depends upon an uninterrupted stop. So if things go awry, he/she may get very upset. If you should pull over a family with a child with ASD in the back, be prepared for what may appear to be a lack of co-operation from the driver. Stopping the engine, flashing lights and sirens are all things that can trigger unwanted behaviour.

Autism Cymru have worked in partnership with police forces across Wales to implement an Attention card scheme. The card alerts people working in the criminal justice system and the emergency services to the fact that an individual has an ASD and what procedures need to be taken.

The Autism Cymru Attention Card Scheme



Feedback on the use of Autism Cymru's Attention card to date has been very positive:

'Incase I get apprehended wrongly and get stressed'

Incase police start asking me questions.

'Could use it if you got lost.'

'I could be in the wrong place at the wrong time and the police might ask questions and get the wrong idea. I would probably react worse than the ones committing the crime. A few years ago I might have hit someone.'

'If I throw a wobbly in the street, the police would know my problem.'

‘I’d use it in tricky situations or when I am too traumatised to speak.’
‘It will help me stay out of trouble.’

‘Someone with Autism or Asperger’s could be stuck without this card.’

The scheme has also been welcomed by parents/carers. They feel that the card gives their son or daughter more independence to participate in activities they enjoy such as travelling by bus, going to football matches or visiting music shops without their behaviour being misinterpreted.

Sometimes individuals with ASD will take flight when they are feeling under stress- or just because they feel like it! We know of young children who have wandered off in busy streets in big cities causing their families a great deal of anxiety. One young child even managed to get on a train by himself and was not found until the train reached its final destination! When young children have no language this creates further problems and often they can be mistaken for having a hearing impairment rather than an ASD. The card system may not be entirely appropriate under these circumstances unless the child is happy for it to be tagged visibly on to a garment. Wrist bands giving details can be used but once again only if tolerance levels allow. Davis and Schunik (2002) suggest attaching a silver identity disk to shoe laces where there would be no tactile discomfort and removal would be difficult. They suggest the tag should contain information such as name, address, phone number, behavioural characteristics and contacts.

Relevant Legislation and Guidance

- The Disability Discrimination Act (2005)
- Disability in the Police Service guidance (2006)
- Reasonable Adjustments Guidance (HMCS, 2009)
- Disability Factsheets (HMCS, 2009)
- The NOMS Equality Impact Assessment Tool (NEAT) (2009)
- Prison Service Order (PSO) ‘2855’

- Probation Circular (Ref:34/2006) - Disability Monitoring
- The Mental Health Act (2007)
- The Mental Capacity Act (2005)

Summary

- Individuals with ASDs can sometimes come into contact with the CJS as both the victims and the perpetrators of crime.
- Strategies such as carrying an ID card and social stories can prevent misunderstandings.
- Individuals should be prepared for any contact they might have with the Emergency Services.
- Individuals with ASDs are no more likely to commit a crime than the general public but they can sometimes be more vulnerable to crime as an offender and as a victim.

Helpful Links and Further Reading

Links within Wales

In April 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government published the world's first government action plan for autism and this strategy has led to a local ASD lead being appointed within every local authority area in Wales. You can find out who your local ASD lead is by contacting your local social services dept or by contacting the Welsh Local Government Association (tel 02920 468600). The WLGA is the home for three ASD regional support officers who will also be able to give you the information you require. Make sure you receive by email regular copies of the WLGA ASD Strategic Action Plan newsletter, which updates autism progress and practice throughout Wales, simply give you email address to the WLGA ASD Regional Support officers ASDinfo@wlga.co.uk

As a result of the WAG ASD Strategic Action Plan there are a number of other awareness-raising materials being published for Teachers, GP surgeries; Clergy and so on All-Wales Autism Resource : a bi-lingual information resource for ASD in Wales and

each autumn runs the world on-line autism conference featuring many of the world's leading educators, clinicians, and researchers www.awares.org

Links outside Wales

The National Autistic Society website contains very useful guidance and advice www.nas.org.uk

Adam Feinstein, who is a both parent of a young man with autism and is employed in Wales by Autism Cymru, is the author of "A History of Autism, Conversations with the Pioneers" published by Blackwells/Wiley. This includes the most accurate history to date of autism, the way is currently viewed throughout the world and the approaches being used by governments and those working with people with autism. This book is viewed as a modern 'classic' in the disabilities field.

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