

# Supplementary Annual Report 2019/20

"The children were reminded of how we are all different and unique."

"The co-production aspect was a huge success and it goes to show that putting this into action and really meaning it works really well."

"I feel I could contact ASDinfoWales at any time for any information."

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In my new role as Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language, I am very pleased to endorse the National Autism Team's Supplementary Annual Report for 2019/20. The experience of Covid-19 has been a difficult time for us all and I am very aware that it has been particularly challenging for autistic people and their families and carers.

Reading through the report, I am struck by the breadth and complexity of the Team's achievements during the year. I commend the collaborative work which has been undertaken with partners to deliver crucial, timely and appropriate support for autistic people during the early phases of the Covid-19 pandemic, which I know is continuing.

The main highlights of the report include the Team's on-going commitment to support the Integrated Autism Service to become embedded across regions, working with the services to establish measurable national standards which demonstrate the positive outcomes being achieved.

The benefits of collaboration are also re-enforced by continuing engagement with the Autism Leads network in local authorities and health boards, which have been key partners in raising awareness and providing local support and guidance for autistic people, their families and for professionals.

The Team's joint work with autistic people to design and deliver a range of digital resources has also been very timely as services have had to adapt to social distancing restrictions. All of these resources and more are available on the new website [www.AutismWales.org](http://www.AutismWales.org), and this includes an on-line compendium of case studies to promote innovative improvement. I am pleased to see the website user numbers increase year on year.

Strong values of collaboration and involvement stand out throughout this report, I strongly believe that we will achieve far more by working together in this way and this approach will be crucial in the future engagement and delivery of the forthcoming code of practice on the delivery of autism services.



Eluned Morgan, MS

*Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language*



Our thanks to Welsh Government for the continued core funding to support the successful implementation of the WG ASD Refreshed Strategic Action Plan and associated Delivery Plan. We'd also like to thank Welsh Local Government Association for hosting the National Autism Team, and to Public Health Wales for their commitment to working in partnership with the Team.

The National Autism Team's (NAT) Annual Report for 2019/20 provides a supplementary report to the substantive document produced in 2018/19. The NAT has continued to work with partners and stakeholders across Wales to improve the lives of autistic people. April 2019 represented a fresh approach as the team changed its name from National ASD Development Team to National Autism Team. This change was in response to many autistic people saying that they prefer the term autism to ASD and to acknowledge that the team is now in a delivery phase of work. It was also the culmination of months of joint planning for a National Conference for Autistic people held in Swansea.

For 2019/20, the Annual Report has less narrative but a greater focus on hearing the voices of people with whom the National Autism Team have worked, together with a focus on the outputs and outcomes of the work.



## ***Here's What You Told Us...***

A clip from Cllr. Huw David, Spokesperson for Health and Social Care, Welsh Local Government Association will soon be available to view here. [Click here](#) to view the text version.





Who is this report for? It's for our key funder and partners and also for all the stakeholders and partners with whom we work: autistic people, their families; professionals working in local authorities and health and beyond. It captures some of the work of Autism Leads, of the Integrated Autism Services, of third sector partners and importantly autistic people themselves. The Annual Report describes what some of you have achieved; what some of you have been involved in; what support some of you have received; what difference you have made and what is being delivered in Wales for autistic people.

You might like the 'audio' approach, including short audio insights across the breadth of people with whom the team have been working. Also, there is compendium containing a range of case studies drawn from the Autism Leads in the Local Authorities working locally, together with examples of the impact the Integrated Autism Service teams are having in their respective regions. Further examples of joint working with Emergency Services and organisations such as CAFCASS Cymru highlight the extent of linkages the NAT has made during this year in increasing awareness and understanding of autism. We have also captured outcomes and impacts.

We hope you find the report informative and of interest. There remains much to be done for autistic people and their families but there is also much to be celebrated.

Sara Harvey

*National Strategic Lead for Autism*

Wendy Thomas

*National Professional Lead for Autism*

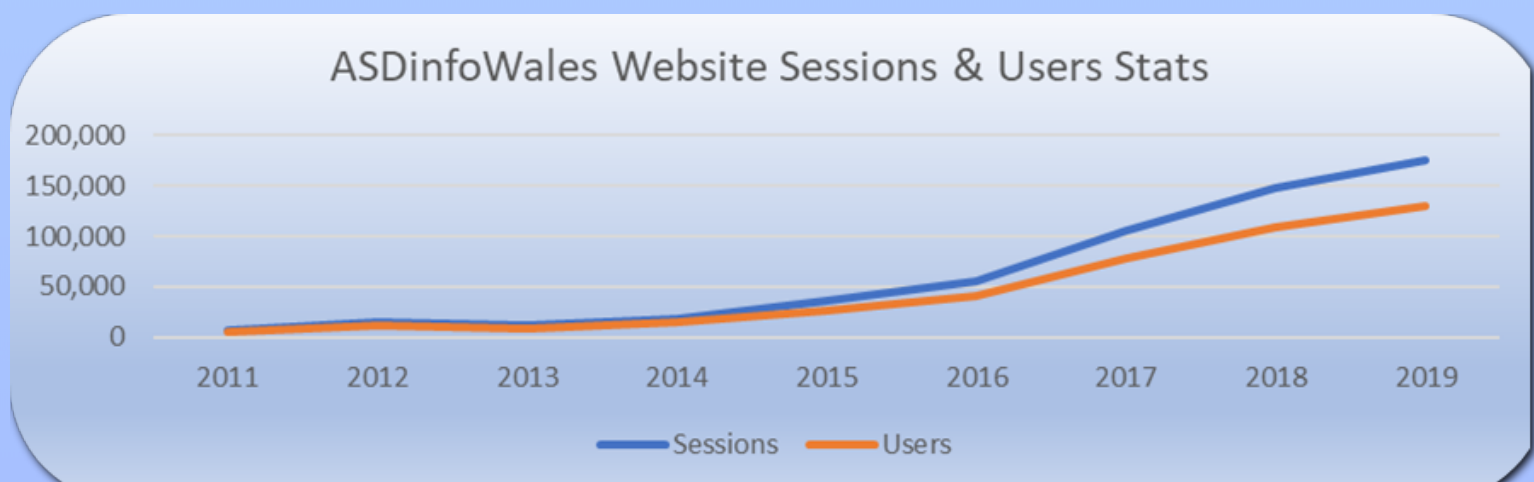
# Chapter 1: National Autism Team

## ASDinfoWales Website

**ASDinfoWales.co.uk** is managed by the National Autism Team. The website is kept up to date and acts as a hub for all national autism developments.

We have seen an **17% increase in users** of the website during 2019 compared to 2018. The number of page views in 2019 also increased to **643,510**.

The website had an average number of **10,833 users per month**, which is almost 1,800 more per month compared to 2018.



## Website Provider

Towards the end of 2019/20, the NAT procured a new website provider via Sell2Wales and work has commenced on moving the existing website to the new provider and developing a new website that will be launched during the Autumn of 2020.

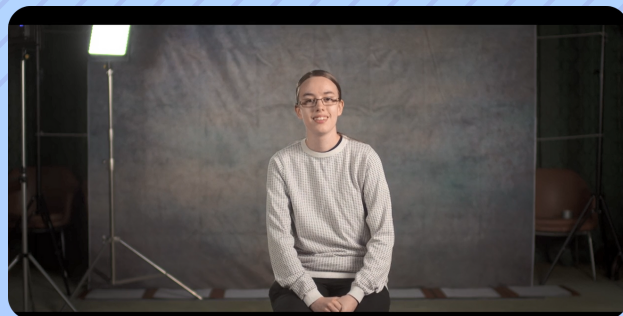
Prior to this, a survey was undertaken via survey monkey to obtain feedback from key stakeholders and current website users regarding the function of the website and quality of the information available.

NAT have since engaged with key stakeholders through social media and existing networks and have set up a Project Team, Project Board and two stakeholder groups to take this work forward.

## Launch Of *What Is Autism?* Film

The NAT formally launched the *What is Autism?* film as a fundamental addition to the Team's **Autism Awareness certification scheme**.

The film follows three autistic people – Amara Tamblyn, Rhiannon Lloyd-Williams and Osian Harries – as they explore their answers to the question “what is autism?”, drawing on their own personal experiences. The film also includes the professional voice of Dr Elin Walker Jones, Consultant Psychologist. The film discusses the following aspects of autism: social communication; patterns and routines; sensory experience; and how to make things better.



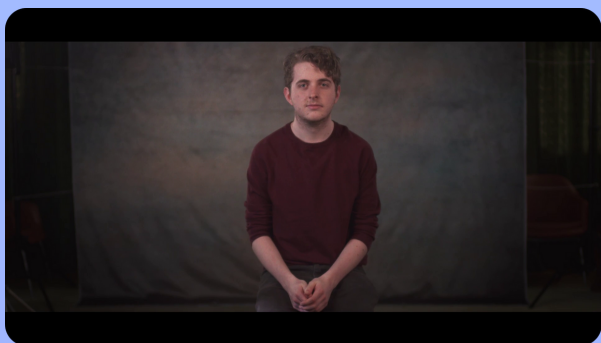
This film was created co-productively with autistic people, and it has been designed to raise awareness and understanding of autism. Since the film was published to the website in 2019, it has been viewed 131 times overall in Welsh and English. The film was also celebrated during World Autism Awareness Week 2020, being shared to the Team's Facebook and Twitter pages on Monday 30th March. The film received 75 Twitter engagements overall (which includes combined data from the Welsh post and English post), and 27 engagements on Facebook.

In last year's Annual Report 2018/19, the *What is Autism?* film features only in Chapter 5 “Further Education and Work Based Learning”, because it was originally developed to complement the training and advice sheets for the Further Education and Work Based Learning resources. However, the film has proven to be popular in many different settings and will therefore feature heavily on many of the pages on the new website.



We have worked to keep our resources and language updated and current to reflect what autistic people would like neurotypicals to understand about autism, and the updating of the Autism Awareness Certification scheme is one example of this. The scheme continues to be used as a positive means of increasing awareness and understanding of autism across all communities.

Over **43,000 people** have successfully undertaken our Autism Aware scheme since its inception. Over **10,500** of these were during 2019/20.



## Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services

The Welsh Government (WG) published a consultation around the draft Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services from November 2018 to March 2019. The consultation raised awareness of the needs of autistic people and provided clarity on the level of support they should receive.

Subsequently, Technical Groups were established, and further engagement sessions arranged by WG to review the feedback from the consultation and to inform the subsequent draft of the Code.

The NAT worked with ASD Leads, IAS Teams, autistic people, and parents/ carers to inform the work around the drafting of the Code and the four areas identified which are: assessment and diagnosis; getting care and support; raising awareness and training; and planning and checking services.

## Engagement and Relationship Building

### Adult Guide

In 2019, the National Autism Team began the process of updating the existing [Guide For Adults Following Diagnosis](#) to ensure that it is made up-to-date, relevant and helpful to autistic adults. Discussion events with stakeholders were arranged that would help to gather feedback, and a standing group began to be assembled which included autistic people that would help to inform how this resource would be updated.

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, these in-person events were unable to take place, however an online survey was shared through the team's social media which several autistic people participated in by providing their feedback. This helped to inform several decisions, such as updating the language used in the guide and formatting the guide as a set of advice sheets. Going forward, the standing group will operate virtually and continue to develop the resource.

### Parents/Carers

From 8th November 2019 to 11th December, a series of focus groups were held throughout Wales by the National Autism Team to allow parents/carers to voice their thoughts and feedback on the existing [Guide For Parents And Carers Following Diagnosis](#).

Following this, a Task & Finish Group was established to take this feedback on board in revising the guide into a set of advice sheets that accompany the [Parent/Carer film](#), and ensuring that this advice meets the need of autistic children and their families across Wales.



## All Wales Virtual Autism Team

The Virtual Autism Team Wales was established to provide accurate, useful, and up-to-date information, advice, and guidance during the COVID-19 emergency to autistic people in Wales, parents/carers of autistic people, and professionals.

The Group identified key themes, information, advice, and guidance from a variety of sources via fortnightly virtual meetings. The group collated, created and disseminated information on the 'most pressing' issues in a user friendly and accessible way.

The Team draws together autistic people and professionals who have worked in the field of autism for many years, from across Wales.



### *Here's What You Told Us...*

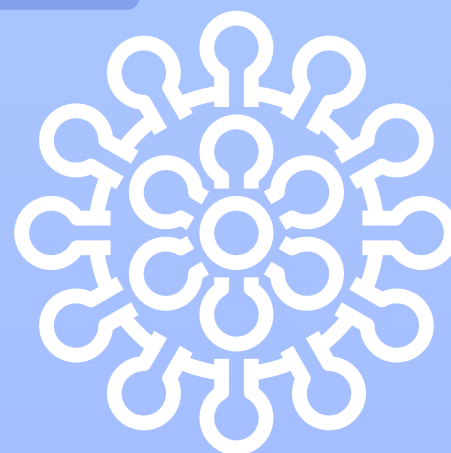


[Click here](#) to hear an audio clip from Willow Holloway speaking about her work with the National Autism Team in 2019/20, or [click here](#) to read the text version.

[Click here](#) to hear an audio clip from Ieuan Rees speaking about his work with the National Autism Team in 2019/20, or [click here](#) to read the text version.

## NAT Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

March 2020 witnessed the world-wide pandemic of Covid-19 and lockdown measures in Wales and the rest of the UK. The NAT reviewed and adjusted its work plan to respond to the needs of autistic people and their families more proactively and created a [Covid-19 hub of information on ASDinfoWales.co.uk](#). The Team also increased our social media activity, as part of this response re-launching the [Facebook page](#) and using [Twitter](#).



We facilitated a group of autistic people and professionals to co-produce briefings and guidance for autistic people and professionals and linked in with the Local Authority Autism Leads at a local level, as a means of capturing the experience "on the ground" of people in communities to help inform the Welsh response to the pandemic, together with the Integrated Autism Services.



# Chapter 2: Integrated Autism Service



Since April 2019, all seven Integrated Autism Services (IASs) have been established and operational across Wales. The aim of the services is to ensure that autistic people, their family, and carers can access the advice, support and interventions needed to enable them to reach their full potential where these are otherwise unavailable. The IASs provide this by conducting diagnostic assessments, delivering post-diagnostic programmes and supporting autistic adults, working in partnership with other organisations to support parents and carers and working in collaboration and consultation with professionals.

## Developments

The National Autism Team has facilitated Community of Practice meetings throughout the year. They provide a forum for the IASs to share good practice and develop consistent resources and guidelines. This year, refreshed IAS Guidance was developed through the Community of Practice meetings, providing clear and updated guidance on the principles and standards of the IASs.



In addition to sharing good practice and information within the IASs the Community of Practice meetings engage with the wider autistic community. Emma Durman, Co-Director of Outside, delivered a presentation on autistic parenting and the birthing experiences of autistic women. This was based on research she had conducted as part of her masters dissertation on the experience of birth as an autistic woman for Swansea University.

## Data

During 2019/20 a new data framework was put in place to capture IAS data. The data framework was developed collaboratively between the National Autism Team and the IAS managers. This first year is seen as a 'development year' and therefore the accuracy of all data may not be absolute but gives a good indication of service activity and demand across Wales.

## Headline Data

The following data headlines were observed:

- **5,651** interactions were made with autistic adults
- **3,337** referrals to the service were made for autistic adults with 36% of these self-referrals from adults
- **65%** of referrals for autistic adults were requesting autism diagnostic assessments and **35%** were requesting support
- **840** adults received a diagnostic assessment
- **639** adults received a positive diagnosis of autism (76%)
- **2,338** interactions were made with parents/ carers
- **680** referrals to the service were made for parents/ carers with 82% of these self-referrals
- **41%** of referrals were for parent/ carers of autistic adults and **35%** were for parent/ carers of autistic children
- **4,651** interactions were made with professionals
- **2,901** new contacts with professionals
- **53%** of contacts were from health professionals, **25%** were professionals from local authorities and **13%** were from the voluntary sector

For further information see the IAS Annual Data report in Appendix A.

## Outcomes Star

To measure the impact of the IAS on the lives of autistic people the Outcomes Star has been identified as a suitable measuring tool. The Outcomes Star is an evidence-based tool that supports and measures change when working with people. It is a holistic, person-centred, outcomes focused and strengths-based tool. Throughout the year IAS staff received training on the Outcomes Star and have started to use it as a way of measuring people's progress while receiving support from the IAS.



### ***Here's What You Told Us...***

**Click here** to hear an audio clip from Andrea Roberts speaking about her work with the National Autism Team in 2019/20, or **click here** to read the text version.

## Emergency Services Training

This scheme has been delivered with a “train the trainer” approach, where members of the National Autism Team have trained a selection of people, who have disseminated the training within their services. The training has been tailored to each emergency service to ensure the sessions are relevant and appropriate to them. The vision for this year is to extend the sessions to North Wales Police and The Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST). We have also commenced engagement with Gwent Police and will be working closely with them this year.

### South Wales Fire and Rescue Services

Extending our Emergency Services Training to South Wales Fire and Rescue Service was part of our training delivery for 2019/20. Three sessions took place with a “Train the Trainer” approach at SWFRS HQ Pontypool. Sally Chapman, Deputy Chief Officer stated:

“SWFRS has been actively engaged with the National Autism Team for some time with the aim of creating an ‘autism aware’ organisation that fully understood and embraced the opportunities open to us through a deeper understanding of autism. The national team have been instrumental in helping us achieve our aim by providing comprehensive advice, guidance and training tailored to our sector.

They have also been pivotal in expanding our horizons through their national conference, where through a combination of presentations, workshops and discussion forums, more in depth discussions took place with members of the community who are autistic, carers, service providers and employers. This is helping to shape not only our service delivery methods but also our employment practices going forward.”

The following responses were captured from the training evaluation forms:

“I found the course informative and able to understand. It has made me think differently and I can now be more aware. Very enjoyable”.

“A very informative course delivered by very knowledgeable trainers. Thank you”.

“Video presentations broke up a lot of information and allowed to absorb the details better. Ice break quizzes were good to relax participants.”

## North Wales Police

In readiness for commencing 'Emergency Services, Train the Trainer' sessions with North Wales Police, Autism Awareness sessions took place as part of the Mental Health and Suicide prevention training. The National Autism Team will continue to work with North Wales Police this year to extend and build on the connections already made within the force and roll out the Emergency Services Train the Trainer package.

## Autism Aware Training

### CAFCASS Cymru

The National Autism Team were pleased to provide autism aware training for CAFCASS Cymru as part of their training events focused on disability. Three sessions were held in mid and south Wales.

The following responses were captured from the evaluation forms following the training:

"Excellent resources, easily adaptable information for practice."

"Thought provoking for practical work."

"Very interesting and informative, excellent speaker and well-paced training."



### *Here's What You Told Us...*

[Click here](#) to hear an audio clip from Kate Thomas (CAFCASS CYMRU) speaking about her work with the National Autism Team in 2019/20, or [click here](#) to read the text version.

## DWP

NAT are working with DWP nationally, alongside local Integrated Autism Services, with the long-term aim of making the organisation autism aware. Whilst sharing the vast range of resources available on our website and assisting Job Coaches, not only to understand autism but highlight the challenges faced by so many neurodiverse job seekers.

The National Autism Team, along with Hazel Dance, the Autism Lead for Neath Port Talbot, received an award for the training and collaboration with DWP in the region.

The award was presented by Ken Skates MS, Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales, and was part of the Hospitality Wales Confident About Disability Awards, recognising and celebrating Wales' success in helping reduce the employment gap and challenging perceptions of autism.





## Can You See Me?



**The Can You See Me Campaign** was promoted in Neath Business District with the Neath Port Talbot Autism Lead, Hazel Dance, along with members of the local steering group. Culminating in an awareness raising event held in the town centre in September 2019, and the Business District receiving the Rainbow Award for autism awareness.

## Learning with Autism – Early Years, Primary and Secondary Programmes

### Local Authorities across Wales including Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, and Rhondda Cynon Taf

Continuing to build on the Learning with Autism Implementation Strategy, the National Autism Team have continued to engage with Stakeholders in the Early Years sector and Education. Promoting the benefit of the LWA resources across Wales. Sessions took place for teachers, headteachers and early years providers.

“Possibly one of the best courses I have been on. Informative, engaging and very interesting. The time went by so quickly, especially after a long day at work.”

“Excellent presentation, the programme will be well received by Flying Start Early Years Settings. I am looking forward to using the tools and resources within the settings and supporting them to adapt their practice where necessary. Thank you.”

“I really liked all the resources available, the films that were shown were simple and easy to understand. I feel I could contact ASDinfoWales at any time for any information. The handouts were so useful. Thank you so much.”

Extending the Learning with Autism programme, the NAT co-produced resources for Further Education and Work Based Learning providers. Working with Autism Leads across Wales, autistic students, several colleges across Wales the National Training Federation for Wales, ACT Training and autistic people, our new guides are designed to help Further Education colleges and Work Based Learning providers to support autistic people. Assisting them in successfully completing their college or WBL learning journey.



## IAS Induction Training

### Western Bay & Cwm Taf IAS

With Integrated Autism Services being established throughout Wales, the NAT were keen to commence a pilot of Induction Training which is beneficial for all, including those at differing stages of recruitment and development.

Positive connections were established across the regions, with the Engage to Change Lead Ambassador, Gerraint Jones Griffiths, attending one of the sessions for Western Bay. Rachel Williams, Autism Advisory teacher from RCT welcomed the opportunity to meet the IAS team virtually and noted that she would be following up the contact with the IAS once lockdown had eased.

"It was a great opportunity for new members of the team to learn about the history of the IAS and ASD services, meet the NAT, meet other stakeholders in session 4 and find out more about how we all work together. It would be very useful for all new staff to have this as part of their overall induction process."

## Outcome Star Training

The Outcomes Star is a family of evidence-based tools for measuring and supporting change when working with people. It is a unique and innovative way for frontline services to demonstrate their impact whilst improving their keywork.

The National Autism Team co-ordinated a series of Outcome Star training sessions for the Integrated Autism Services across Wales. Measuring progress and outcomes for people accessing the IAS's nationally, the training has enabled a clear understanding of how to use the tool effectively.

Five two-day training sessions were provided for established individual IASs from 11th March 2019 to 18th June 2019. An additional mop-up session for anyone who missed the initial training sessions was held on the 21st November 2019. Further training will be provided to members of the IASs who were unable to attend previous sessions, or who are new to post.

## Autism and Attachment Symposium – The Overlap

### Symposium for CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), Neurodevelopmental Services, Children's Social Workers and Children's Social Care Support Workers

Our first symposium was held in February 2020, aimed at increasing knowledge and awareness of attachment and autism and how they can present in similar ways. Delivered by TRM Academy, Barry Coughlan, with Professor Alka Ahuja and Anne Marie McKigney (ABUHB), helping to improve practice to better meet the emotional and mental health needs of autistic children and young people. Some comments from the session are captured below:

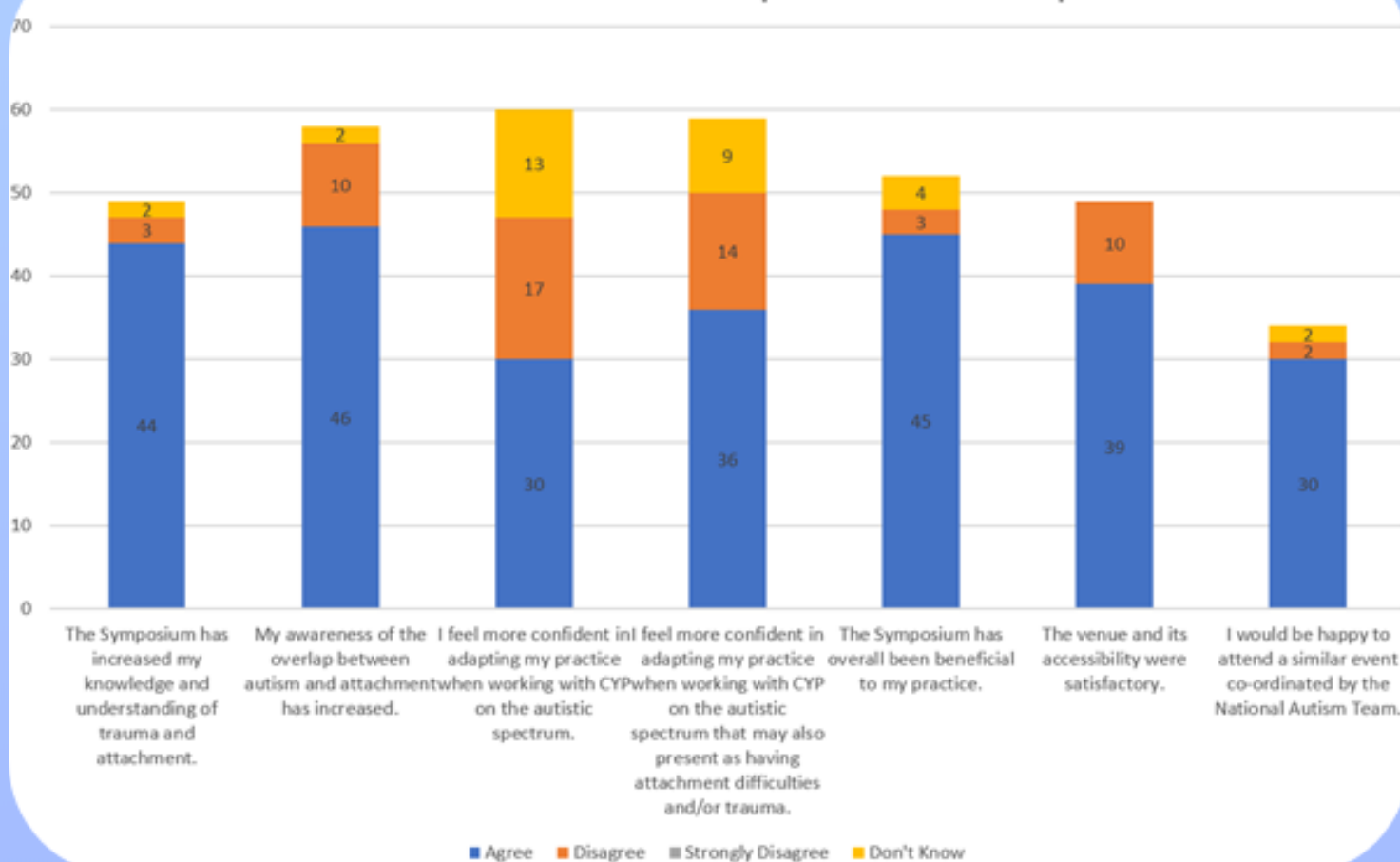
"Morning session excellent, trauma related model clearly defined and delivery first class. Afternoon slot with Aneurin Bevan HB excellent."

"From meeting others within different disciplines highlighted a massive gap in multi-disciplinary working and arrangements. This must be causing significant issues for individuals."

"Good presentations, which were helpful in my learning and glad I will have the opportunity to read these again."

"I learnt from the Attachment and Complex PTSD discussion. I learned lots as well from the Trauma led Model and I am really interested as I work with lots of children/YP in reprocessing trauma memories. These both were really interesting and stimulating - please could we have more. Hearing the practical dilemmas of the ND team in practice resonated with our practice."

**'Autism And Attachment – The Overlap' Evaluation Form Responses**



# Chapter 4: Learning with Autism

## Learning with Autism - Statistics

### The Early Years Programme

Since its launch at the end of September 2017, **1,741 staff** have undertaken the training programme and **71** Early Year Settings have received their LWA award, **26 of these were during 2019/20.**

In the last year, feedback following the evaluation forms from these settings have shown that **100% agree** that 'the LWA programme increased their understanding of autism' and **100%** agreed when answering 'Do you feel the programme has had a positive impact on children?'



The following quote was received by a setting who completed the programme in 2019/20.

"Our day to day practice has changed considerably, we have removed all things from the walls, we have had the room painted a subtle light blue/grey. We have had the busy blinds removed and replaced with plain ones. The sensory room is an extremely vital area for children, and we have now painted this black and have black out roller blinds. We have changed some children's start and finish times to correspond to their needs. This has enabled some children to miss busy overwhelming times of the session. We have removed lots of toys from the childcare room as these seemed to over stimulate some of the children."

- Sea View Flying Start

### The Primary Schools Programme

This programme was launched in March 2016, and during 2018/19 a further **58 schools** achieved their LWA award, contributing to a total of **185 schools across Wales**, and the following have been undertaken this year:

- **1,721 Teaching Staff** (6,913 in total)
- **1,773 Learning support Staff** (6,992 in total)
- **12,977 Autism Superheroes** (41,627 in total)

The feedback from the evaluation forms from these schools have shown: **100% agreed** when asked 'Has the programme increased your ability to recognise any particular signs of autism that you might have missed before?'; **98% agreed** to the question 'Has the Learning with Autism programme led to changes being made to a child's IEP?'; and **100% agreed** that they '[Would] recommend the Learning with Autism Programme to other schools.

The following quote was received by a setting who completed the programme in 2019/20.

"The programme has allowed children to be a lot more understanding and considerate towards some of their peers who have difficulties. They have more patience and concern for those around them." - *Penllwyn Primary School*

## The Secondary Schools Programme

Since its launch at the beginning of September 2017, **3,997 staff** have undertaken the training programme, and **22,000 pupils** have received the Sgilti lesson and taken their pledge. A further **7 schools** across Wales have received their LwA award this past year, which takes it to **16 in total**.

The feedback from the evaluation forms from these settings have shown **100% agree** that 'the LWA programme increased [their] understanding of autism', and **100% also agreed** to the question 'Has the programme increased your ability to recognise any particular signs of autism that you might have missed before?'. Moreover, **all schools** have stated that they would recommend the programme to other schools.

An example of the changes made following the programme can be seen in the following quote from a school who completed the programme in 2019/20.

"School staff are adapting lessons to suit pupils with ASD including being far more aware that these pupils may require support to access and understand work particularly in group situations and in paired work." - *Penyrheol Comp School*

In addition, other support staff such as governors, catering and administration staff across settings and schools have achieved Autism Aware certificates as part of the LWA programmes, which contribute to the 10,574 that were awarded during 2019/20.

For further information see the Learning with Autism Evaluation Report: feedback following award in Appendix B.

## Hwb digital platform

Hwb is the Welsh Government's digital platform for learners and teachers which provides access to a range of centrally funded, bilingual, digital tools and resources. During 2019/20 the Learning with Autism resources were uploaded onto the Welsh Government's Hwb platform making the LWA resources visible and accessible to schools.



### ***Here's What You Told Us...***

[Click here](#) to hear an audio clip from Linda Pilgrim speaking about her work with the National Autism Team in 2019/20, or [click here](#) to read the text version.

# Chapter 5: Work Based Learning & Further Education Launch



The Work Based Learning and Further Education resources were developed during 2018/19, and include the following:

- A generic What is Autism? film, which is shown at the beginning of the training.
- Two specific training films for WBL and FE providers showing the student/ learner journeys.
- Two resource folders (WBL & FE) that include advice sheets, case studies and useful templates that can be used by WBL providers/ FE institutes.
- Two separate student/ learner folders (WBL & FE) including things to consider before, during and after a placement. The folders also provide some useful information, structure and templates.

Unlike the other Learning with Autism schemes, the WBL and FE schemes certification will rest with the providers. The colleges and the WBL providers, in discussion with the National Autism Team, will be responsible for the roll out the schemes.

## Work Based Learning (WBL)

The National Autism Team worked with the National Training Federation for Wales, Keith Ingram (Cardiff & Vale ASD Lead), and ACT (Associated Community Training Limited) to produce **these resources**.

The WBL resources were launched at an event held on 24th September 2019 that was attended the Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams MS, and a number of providers from across Wales.

Further training sessions have been arranged to take place during May / June 2020 using existing regional networks across Wales.





## Further Education (FE)

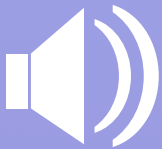


**The resources for the FE scheme** were co-produced with Colegau Cymru, FE colleges, autistic learners, and parents/carers across Wales.

A celebratory event to officially launch the resources was held on 5th March 2020 at Bridgend College.



Feedback to date has been very positive, and highlight that the resources are informative and providers are looking forward to using these to support their learners/ students further.



### ***Here's What You Told Us...***

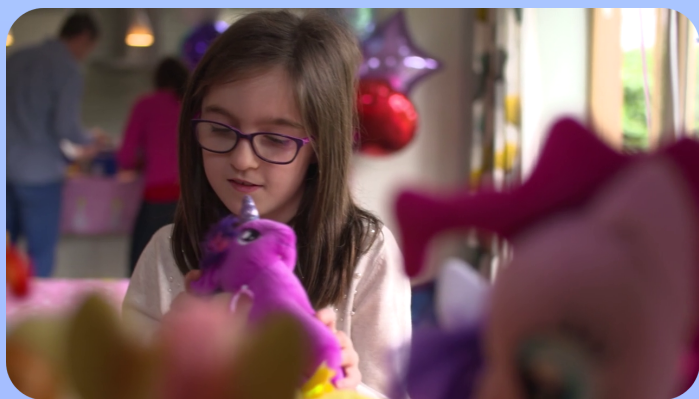
**Click here** to hear an audio clip from Ewan Richards speaking about his work with the National Autism Team in 2019/20, or **click here** to read the text version.

# Chapter 6: The Birthday Party Film and SIGNS

## The Birthday Party

**The Birthday Party** is a film made in partnership between the National Autism Team in the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA); Professor Sue Leekam and Dr Catherine Jones, then Co-Directors of the Wales Autism Research Centre (WARC) in Cardiff University; Aston University; and Clinical Psychology partners.

The film was produced in 2017 and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and Welsh Government, with the purpose of improving front-line professionals' understanding and awareness of the signs of autism in children.



During 2019/20, The Birthday Party film won the People's Choice award at Cardiff University's Innovation and Impact Awards 2019. In addition to the award, the National Autism Team and WARC have received further requests throughout the year to have the film adapted and translated into multiple languages.



Overall, the film has now received 151 requests from 16 different countries internationally to use the film for education and training purposes – from Chile, to Australia, to Singapore. Organisations using the film are broad, cutting across a range of clinical services; education and government services; autism and children's charities; universities and research centres; and an interesting range of miscellaneous organisations.

## Summary of requests from different countries to use The Birthday Party film for educational purposes:

Country	Number of requests
1. UK	48
2. Spain	30
3. Latvia	21
4. Italy	16
5. Lithuania	11
6. Australia	11
7. Chile	3
8. Ireland	2
9. Vietnam	2
10. Canada	1
11. Kenya	1
12. Argentina	1
13. Mexico	1
14. Netherlands	1
15. Singapore	1
16. Venezuela	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>151</b>

The types of individuals being trained and educated include key frontline staff (CPD or as part of initial training/ degree); a range of other types of staff (e.g. librarians, church leaders); parents/carers and family members; and university students on relevant undergraduate or Master's degree courses.

**The Impact Report** details the development and overall impact of the film since its early stages in 2015, including quotes from professionals and parents, and a summary of how the film has resulted in a significant improvement in understanding of autism after being watched.

### *Here's What You Told Us...*



[Click here](#) to hear an audio clip from Dr Catherine Jones speaking about her work with the National Autism Team in 2019/20, or [click here](#) to read the text version.

[Click here](#) to hear an audio clip from Professor Sue Leekam speaking about her work with the National Autism Team in 2019/20, or [click here](#) to read the text version.

## Excerpt from WLGA Release

**Monday 21 October 2019**

### **New guidance launched to help Housing professionals to support autistic people:**

A new guide has been launched today to help professionals working in housing to better understand the needs of autistic people in gaining access to housing services.

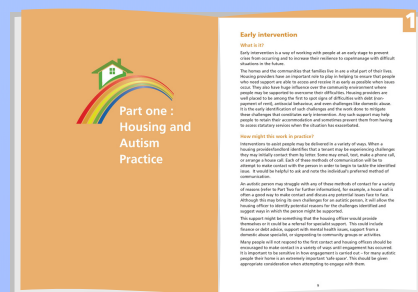
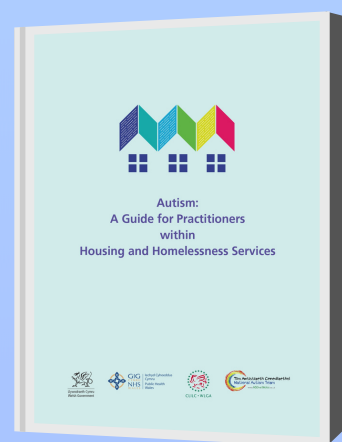
Autistic people have consistently identified challenges in seeking appropriate housing services help and support due to a lack of understanding of the condition and their individual needs. A Shelter Cymru report has similarly identified challenges including uncomfortable visits to busy office environments to access Housing Options services, and a lack of support to explain to autistic people the range of services available to them.

In response to this need, the National Autism Team has worked with a group of stakeholders including Housing professionals, professionals working in the field of autism and advisors, parents and carers of autistic people and the National Autistic Society Cymru, to produce a refreshed guide to better enable front-line professionals to work with autistic people in accessing Housing support and information.

### **Councillor Huw David (Bridgend), WLGA Spokesperson for Health and Social Care said:**

"Autistic people have as much of a right as anyone else to access housing support, and they have consistently indicated that the support on offer to them could be improved. The National Autism Team has heard that feedback loud and clear and has worked with a range of valued partners and professionals to produce this excellent resource which will be available across public, private and third sectors.

"I am very pleased to see the launch of this guide which I hope will help Housing professionals to better understand autism, and to be better able to support their individual needs. I'm proud that this is another example of the Team truly listening to the needs of autistic people, and to respond in a collaborative and person-centred approach."





**Julie James, Minister for Housing and Local Government said:**

"I welcome this updated guide which highlights the issues some people with autism face when applying for housing for the first time, or the obstacles they can encounter within their tenancies. The Guide builds on a 'person-centred' approach, putting individuals at the heart of the decision-making process, helping to identify issues early on to address possible conflict.

"What we need in Wales is good quality, stable housing. This is the foundation of thriving communities. The Guide and the principles it promotes will help us achieve these goals and I recommend its use to all housing practitioners."

**Tracey Cooper, Chief Executive of Public Health Wales said:**

"Good quality housing is essential to the health and wellbeing of the population, and it is essential that people are appropriately supported and informed as they interface with housing services."

**Oliver Townsend, Policy and External Affairs Manager at Cymorth Cymru and Chair of the cross-sector writing group that co-produced the guide said:**

"Autistic people are overrepresented in the rough sleeping population, which is evidence that the housing system needs to do more. We need to change our approach to supporting people with autism to access and maintain secure housing, ensuring that services are person centred and psychologically informed. It has been a privilege to chair this group of passionate and dedicated people, who have worked together to produce an excellent document full of practical tips and good practice examples. We encourage everyone working in this area to read this guide, consider how they can embed this approach and improve their response to autistic people with housing issues."

**This guide is available on [the ASDinfoWales website](#).**



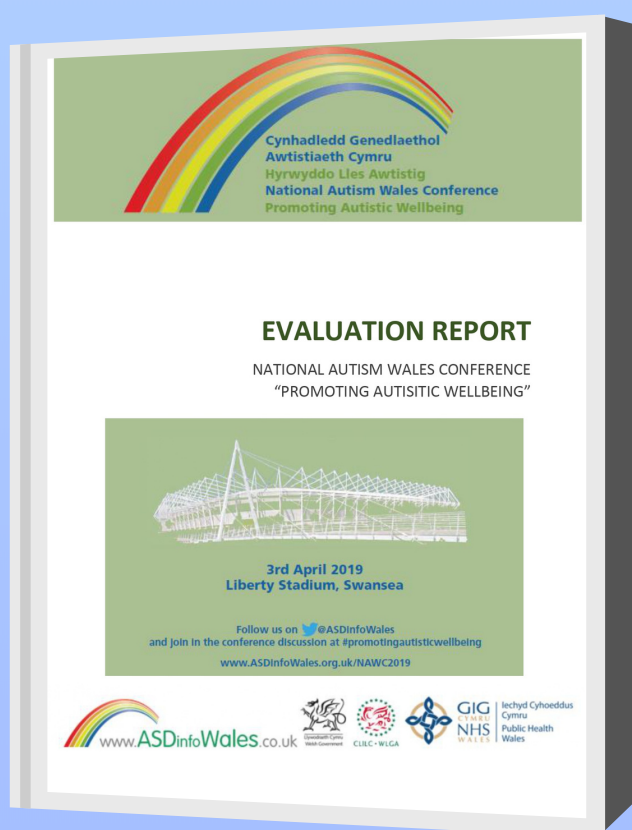
# Chapter 8: National Autism Wales Conference

The impact and overarching success of the National Autism Wales Conference “Promoting Autistic Wellbeing”, held at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea in April 2019, continues to inform the work of the National Autism Team.

## Evaluation Report

In July 2019, an Evaluation Report of the Conference was produced, which was reviewed and endorsed by the Conference Task and Finish Group before being **published to the ASDinfoWales website**. The Report details the feedback received from delegates in the Conference’s evaluation form, and includes a supported Technical Appendices document which captures the written comments from the evaluation forms.


The Report found that, of the 93 delegates who returned the form, 97% strongly agreed that the speakers were informative, 95% agreed that the questions were handled to their satisfaction, 95% agreed that the workshops were productive and informative, 92% agreed the conference was beneficial to their own autistic wellbeing (or understanding of autistic wellbeing), 93% agreed the venue and accessibility were adequate, and 90% agreed that they would be happy to attend a similar event at the Liberty Stadium again.



The Report also found that the top three most common responses to being asked what the main things learnt from the conference were: a greater sense of awareness and understanding of autism and what support is available for autistic people in Wales; an awareness that the individual is not alone (or better understanding of themselves); and methods for successful interactions with other people, both autistic and neurotypical.

Individual comments were also included in the report, as well as areas that could be improved upon or considered more for the future, such as a clearer communication strategy, catering and improved timings throughout the day.

The Evaluation Report, alongside the feedback and comments included within the Technical Appendices, serves as a testament to how positive and successful the Conference was, as well as a reference for future events held by the National Autism Team. Much of the ongoing work of the NAT has been informed by the Conference.




Cynhadledd Genedlaethol Awstiaeth Cymru Hynryddo Lles Awstistig  
National Autism Wales Conference Promoting Autistic Wellbeing

#### 4. Questionnaire


97% of delegates who had answered the questionnaire strongly agreed that the speakers were informative, prepared and understandable. 95% agreed that the questions and discussion were handled to their satisfaction. 97% agreed that the workshops were productive, clear and informative.

92% agreed that the conference had been beneficial to their own autistic wellbeing or understanding of autistic wellbeing. 93% agreed that the venue and its accessibility were adequate. 90% agreed that they would be happy to attend a similar event at Liberty Stadium again.



Jules Robertson and Gemma Smith

*"[Jules Robertson provided] fantastic insight into life as an autistic actor" – Autistic Delegate*




Cynhadledd Genedlaethol Awstiaeth Cymru Hynryddo Lles Awstistig  
National Autism Wales Conference Promoting Autistic Wellbeing

#### Evaluation Form Answers

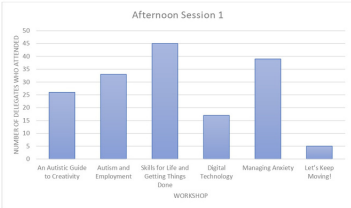
Please tick whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Overall, the speakers were informative, prepared, and understandable.	61	38	1	1	1
The questions and discussion were handled to my satisfaction.	43	53	5	1	0
The workshops were productive, clear and informative.	52	38	1	0	1
The conference has been beneficial to my own autistic wellbeing or understanding of autistic wellbeing.	48	45	3	3	2
The venue and its accessibility were adequate.	55	40	5	1	1
I would be happy to attend a similar event here again.	68	23	5	5	0

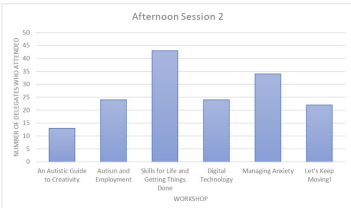



Cynhadledd Genedlaethol Awstiaeth Cymru Hynryddo Lles Awstistig  
National Autism Wales Conference Promoting Autistic Wellbeing

#### Afternoon Session 1



#### Afternoon Session 2






Cynhadledd Genedlaethol Awstiaeth Cymru Hynryddo Lles Awstistig  
National Autism Wales Conference Promoting Autistic Wellbeing

Refreshments and lunch were provided throughout the day, with the autistic harpist and student, Rhys Whitty, performing over the lunch hour. There was also a Sensory Room, Quiet Room, and a Calm Down Room open all day for the delegates to use whenever they felt they needed to, staffed by the Welcome and Support Team. A detailed Accessibility Guide was produced and circulated a week in advance of the Conference and made available on the day. PHW provided support in registration online pre/post Conference, and on the day itself.

Rhi, your workshop at the #ASD conference today was exceptional. It was a delight to be invited and encouraged to be beautifully ourselves with no agenda other than the joy to be found in creative self expression. We are a wonderful presence and

Watch this space! I will share links and transcript when it's available.

Huge thank you to @ASDInfoWales for giving me this opportunity which has truly been appreciated - and to everyone for their beautiful words and support. What a fantastic community we have.



SUPPLEMENTARY ANNUAL REPORT  
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# Chapter 9: World Autism Awareness Week 2020 in Challenging Times

During World Autism Awareness Week (WAAW) 2020, the National Autism Team's celebrations had to be swiftly adapted in response to the **Covid-19** pandemic. The team had to approach this year's WAAW with sensitivity, ensuring that the resources being shared were still relevant and helpful to the autistic people, parents/carers, and professionals receiving the information. Whilst last year's WAAW 2019 included the first **National Autism Wales Conference** at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea, this year's WAAW was conducted "virtually", in accordance with the Welsh Government lockdown restrictions.



During this climate of uncertainty, the main goal of the Team was to continue to support autistic people and their families, and continue to increase awareness and understanding of the needs of autistic people and their parents/carers amongst the general public. Therefore, during lockdown, at least three social media posts were made every day on the Team's **Facebook** and **Twitter** pages, in order to share information from reliable sources regarding the Covid-19 virus such as Public Health Wales, Learning Disability Wales and Autism Wellbeing Cymru. The Team also published the resources created by the Virtual Autism Team Wales (which was set up and facilitated by the National Autism Team at the start of the lockdown period) on social media to explain the latest Welsh Government guidance and how it might specifically affect autistic people e.g. the **Test, Trace and Protect** process in Wales. This was a "gap" in information which required filling.

The Team remained dedicated to this task throughout WAAW 2020 and the additional social media posts which specifically celebrated the week are captured below.

### **Monday 30th March**

#### ***Launch of What Is Autism? Film***

The film was launched during WAAW because it is an informative and useful resource which people can watch from home with ease. The film is also a new addition to the Autism Aware certification scheme, which aims to increase understanding of autism amongst the general public, giving people the opportunity to engage with the scheme whilst self-isolating at home.

For more information see Chapter 1.

### **Tuesday 31st March**

#### ***Subtitles on National Autism Team Films***

Lockdown was also an opportunity to celebrate the fact that the Team are dedicated to adding subtitles to all the films on the ASDinfoWales website, which people could watch from home.

This work responds to the needs of people with hearing impairments, and the first films which now feature bilingual subtitles are What Is Autism? and Can You See Me.

### **Wednesday 1st April**

#### ***ASDinfoWales Website***

The Team will launch a brand new website in 2020/21 which will have accessibility at its core. The Team shared this information during WAAW 2020, and asked for any autistic people, parents/ carers or professionals working in the field who want to be involved in informing the new website to contact the Team. As with most of the resources that the Team deliver, this work will be co-produced with autistic people and their families, and this post was the first step in the development of the new website.

For more information see Chapter 1.

### **Thursday 2nd April**

#### ***Launch of the Getting to Know Geraint Film***

The Team conducted a film interview with Geraint Jones Griffiths, Lead Ambassador for the Engage to Change Project, in December 2019. By WAAW 2020, the film was ready to be published. The film highlights how the Team works with autistic people across Wales, and the aim was to provide a role model for young autistic adults who are seeking employment – something which will be increasingly important as lockdown restrictions ease and people are able to return to work.

For more information see Chapter 10.

### **Friday 3rd April**

#### ***Highlight Participation Projects 2019-20***

The final post from the Team during WAAW 2020 was to celebrate the resources which were co-produced and published during 2019/20. These included the new Further Education and Work Based Learning resources, as well as the Housing Guide. The Team wanted to extend a public “thank you” to everyone who had been involved in the projects, and to everyone who will be using the resources in the future.

For more information see Chapter 1.



# Chapter 10: Case Studies

## Case Studies Compendium

During 2019/20, the National Autism Team collected more case studies from the IASs and local Autism Leads than ever before. The case studies range from testimonials of individual lives being changed for the better, to evidence of fantastic cross-service joint working which has the needs of the individual at its core. We hope you enjoy reading through some of the case studies from this year as much as we did. Please note there will be more to follow which will be published on the [ASDinfoWales.co.uk website](https://www.asdinfo.wales.co.uk) throughout the course of the year. The case studies vary from short compliments, to “spotlight” short paragraphs, to full case studies.

To view the compendium please [click here](#).

## Getting to know Gerraint

The NAT also filmed a digital case study with Gerraint Jones Griffiths, the Lead Ambassador for the Engage to Change project, called **“Getting to know Gerraint”** in November 2019. The film was launched and shared on the Team’s social media platforms during World Autism Awareness Week 2020.

Gerraint is just one of many examples of somebody the NAT have met and worked with who provides an excellent role model for young autistic adults. Gerraint and his family’s experience provides a positive example of statutory and third sector services combining effectively to improve the wellbeing of a young autistic child and enabling him to reach his full potential when transitioning into adulthood. The film is available in Welsh and English, and subtitles are also available in both languages.

The NAT are dedicated to creating more digital stories and interviews with autistic people in the future as they allow autistic people to say what they want others to know about autism from their perspective and point of view.



### ***Here's What You Told Us...***

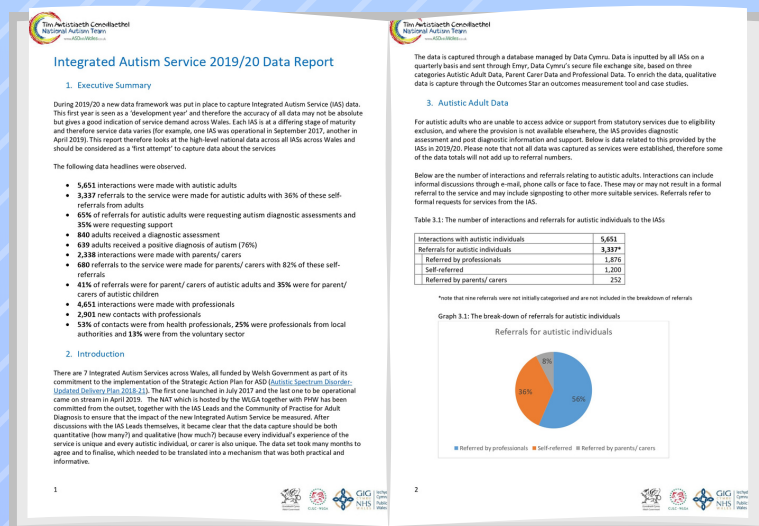


[Click here](#) to hear an audio clip from Gerraint Jones Griffiths speaking about his work with the National Autism Team in 2019/20, or [click here](#) to read the text version.

# Appendices

## Appendix A Integrated Autism Service 2019/20 Data Report

To view the report click [here](#).



## Appendix B Learning with Autism Evaluation Report: feedback following award

To view the report click [here](#).

