

CHAPTER 2

Integrated Autism Service



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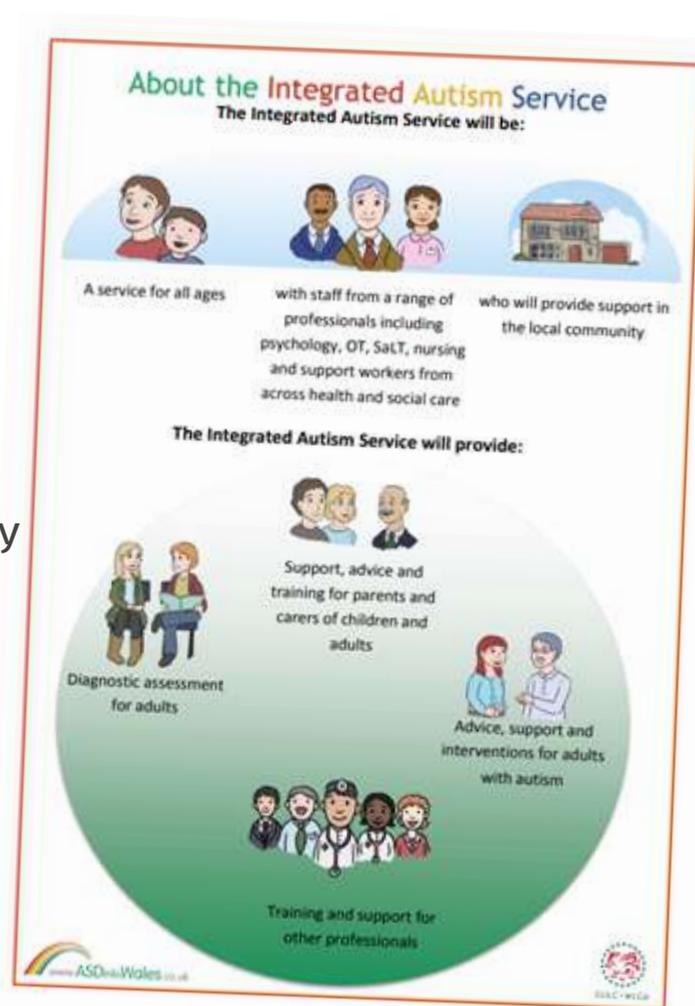
Background

The IAS was developed in response to a broad consultation across Wales in 2015 which highlighted a lack of support for autistic adults who were not eligible for statutory services.

In March 2017, the Minister for Health and Social Services announced an additional investment of £7 million to support the development of the Integrated Autism service for Wales. This takes the total funding for the service up to a total of £13 million.

The IAS was developed because autistic individuals, parents and carers told us they needed more support. They told us they can't access services because they don't meet the eligibility criteria. They told us they wanted support with:

- Behaviour issues
- Emotional issues, such as anxiety and anger
- Developing social and daily living skills
- Accessing leisure and recreational activities



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We learned that autistic adults and children and their families' lives are severely affected because they can't access the correct support, that many can't leave the house on a daily basis and that parents and carers feel highly stressed.

We also heard that many adults who think they may have autism find it difficult to access a diagnostic assessment.

The service therefore provides: diagnostic assessment for autistic adults (sometimes jointly with other services); support, advice and guidance for autistic adults and parent-carers; training, consultation and advice to professionals.

Rollout

The rollout of the service has been done in two phases across the 7 Health Board areas in Wales, with the National ASD Development Team providing guidance and oversight to all IASs, as well as chairing the National IAS meetings which take place quarterly.

By April 2019, all 7 IASs are established across Wales, but some are still not fully staffed yet.

This year also saw Duncan Holtom from The People and Work Unit produce a report entitled "Evaluation of the IAS and Refreshed ASD SAP". The report's findings highlight that the IAS is largely delivering what was intended, however it has taken a significant amount of time to become fully operational – with some of the IASs still not fully staffed.

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However, the experiences of people accessing the IAS has generally improved as services have developed. The evaluation reports that prospects for the future are encouraging, provided services can cope with demand, retain staff and secure funding for the service beyond 2021.

For further information on this report, please visit:
<https://gov.wales/evaluation-integrated-autism-service-and-autistic-spectrum-disorder-strategic-action-plan-final>.

Some quotes from the evaluation report:

“These teams are working in person-centred ways and developing their services to meet the needs of individuals and groups.”

“Although long waiting times have developed for both children and adults, there is now a service for them and the level of demand is evidence of a previously unmet need.”

“Too early to judge the impact of the IAS. However, early evidence about the impact is encouraging and shows that it has markedly increased the capacity of adult assessment and diagnosis services.”

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The total number of positive diagnoses via the IAS to date is more than 350.

Post-Diagnostic Programme

In 2019/20, all IASs will be rolling out a post diagnostic programme – a 6-week programme with a focus on many different areas, for example, relationships, health and wellbeing etc.

Outcome

In 2018/19, the National ASD Development Team worked closely with the IAS teams to gather case studies of examples of the impact of the IAS on autistic adults.

In 2019/20, the Integrated Autism Service Teams Team will implement an agreed outcome “star” measure tool which all of the IASs must follow to maintain continuity across the service.

For examples of case studies for each of the IASs and good practice across Wales, please see Appendix THREE. A further catalogue of case studies for all of the IASs is also available to view on the ASDinfoWales site.

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In order to support the roll out of the seven IASs at a national level, a number of training courses have been arranged and/or delivered by the National ASD Development Team:

- In February 2019, a 2-day training course was delivered by the National Autism Leads to the North Wales IAS teams.
- During 2018/19, 14 staff from all 7 health boards benefitted from the DISCO Team's training. This Team derives from the NAS Lorna Wing Centre and stands for Diagnostic Interview for Social and Communication Disorders (DISCO). The service is used as both a clinical and a research instrument for use with children and adults of any age. This provides delegates with the skills to use this diagnostic tool within the IAS.
- Over 5 days in December 2018, and again in January 2019, the National Autism Team coordinated 2 combined Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) and Autism Diagnostic Interview - Revised (ADiR) training courses. These sessions trained 24 staff members across 3 regional IASs. The training course was delivered by "BeginningwithA" and the course ensured staff were equipped to administer and code the ADOR and ADiR.



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- During the latter part of 2018/19 a 2-day training programme on the Outcomes Star and Conversations for Change was commissioned and coordinated by the National ASD Development Team for all members of the IAS teams across Wales. The training and licences were provided by “Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise”, and the licences to access this online tool were created for 74 members of staff across Wales.
- In 2017/18 the National ASD Development Team commissioned specific Mental Health training for practitioners which continues to be rolled out across Wales. This training is being delivered by “Aspects - Adult Autism Psychology Ltd”, and they have held 32 1-day training sessions during 2018/19 and the roll out of the programme continues into 2019/20. The IAS teams will continue with this training and a “hand over” and Train the Trainer session has been arranged for June 2019.