

# CHAPTER 11

## World Autism Awareness Week 2019



# World Autism Awareness Week

## Introduction

Throughout World Autism Awareness Week, the Team worked with the WLGA's Communications Department to release regular press releases, celebrating different aspects of the Team's work throughout the year.

**Monday 1st April**

Launch of Parent-Carer film in support of parents and carers following a child's diagnosis (for more information, visit Chapter 6)



**Tuesday 2nd April**

Launch of consultation concerning a Participation and Engagement Strategy at the Going for Gold Event led by Willow Holloway at the Senedd, and chaired by Mark Isherwood, AM (Chapter 1)



**Wednesday 3rd April**

National Autism Wales Conference "Promoting Autistic Wellbeing", Liberty Stadium Swansea (Chapter 10)



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**Thursday 4th April**  
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to promote their commitment and intention to be Autism Aware as a Fire Service (first in Wales) as a part of the pilot for the Emergency Services Programme (Chapter 8)



**Friday 5th April**  
WLGA and Data Cymru celebrate the achievement of becoming Autism Aware organisations with over 80% of staff achieving Autism Aware certification during 2018/19 (Chapter 3)



**WAAW** also marked the Team's change of name from 'National ASD Development Team' to the 'National Autism Team' in response to the autistic community's preference for a more generic term than 'disorder' or 'condition.'

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## WLGA Press Releases

01/04/2019: WLGA Press Release - More Support For Parents And Carers Of Newly Diagnosed Autistic Children

A new film is being launched today by the National Autism Team which aims to support parents and carers of newly-diagnosed autistic children.

Feedback from autistic people and other stakeholders has indicated that there is a gap in support and guidance in the period immediately after diagnosis.

Clinicians and professionals will be able to signpost parents and carers to the film upon their diagnosis, and it is also easily accessible as a reference point online.

The film was commissioned by the National Autism Team – formerly National ASD Development Team – which is funded by Welsh Government and hosted by WLGA, in close partnership with Public Health Wales.

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

“For parents and carers, their child being diagnosed with autism can often be a bewildering experience due to a general lack of understanding of autism as a condition.

“The film was commissioned by the National Autism Team in direct response from autistic people that there isn’t enough support and guidance immediately after receiving a diagnosis. I hope this film will help to offer reassurance to parents and carers, and to show that there is information available that can really help them understand what the diagnosis means and practical advice about day to day living.”

“In addition to the film, the National Autism Team have an array of useful materials available on [www.ASDinfoWales.co.uk](http://www.ASDinfoWales.co.uk) to support autistic individuals and those around them.”

[www.ASDinfoWales.co.uk/tv](http://www.ASDinfoWales.co.uk/tv)

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03/04/2019: WLGA Press Release - First Of Its Kind Event To Promote Autistic Wellbeing

Autistic people came together on Wednesday, coinciding with World Autism Awareness Day, at Swansea's Liberty Stadium in an exciting event to learn more about wellbeing and how to live independent lives.

Over 150 autistic people were welcomed to the conference, which was developed and co-produced by autistic individuals.

The packed agenda for the day featured a range of sessions contributing to improve understanding of good overall wellbeing, including mental health, physical exercise, further education, yoga and ageing well, to name but a few.

Delegates at the event also heard from Holby City actor and autistic advocate Jules Robertson, who discussed his own experiences of the condition.

The conference was coordinated by the National Autism Team (formerly National Autism Development Team) in partnership with National Autistic Society Cymru, Public Health Wales, the Ospreys, Swansea City FC and Swansea University.

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Speaking before the event, Councillor Huw David (Bridgend), WLGA Spokesperson for Health and Social Care said:

“I am delighted that after many months of planning, the first National Autism Wales Conference – Promoting Autistic Wellbeing is taking place as part of World Autism Awareness Week.”

“Autistic individuals have consistently said that they feel ‘invisible’ as far as key events go for them in the community. This feedback has been heard clearly by the National Autism Team, and the conference – developed and co-produced by autistic people, for autistic people – is a direct response.”

“I sincerely hope that the agenda offers something for everyone and will offer helpful and practical advice in terms of promoting wellbeing and how to live independent lives.”

Also speaking before the event, Vaughan Gething AM, Minister for Health and Social Services said:

“Today’s event provides a welcome opportunity to discuss the unique challenges many autistic people face in their day-to-day lives and to look at ways to maintain and promote well-being. The Welsh Government is continuing to invest in the development of new integrated services to improve support for autistic people and their families.”

[www.ASDinfoWales.co.uk/NAWC2019](http://www.ASDinfoWales.co.uk/NAWC2019)

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05/04/2019: WLGA Press Release - WLGA and Data Cymru Achieve Autism Aware Status

The WLGA and Data Cymru have both achieved 'Autism Aware' status, following successful completion of a training programme by the National Autism Team.

For an organisation to successfully achieve 'Autism Aware' status, it must have demonstrated its commitment by ensuring that a significant proportion of its staff members have undertaken and successfully completed the Autism Aware Certification scheme.

It is estimated that 1 in 100 people are autistic. Registering as an Autism Aware organisation will support autistic people to better access its services, and will increase staff members' awareness of the condition.

Dr Chris Llewelyn, WLGA Chief Executive said:

"I am extremely pleased that WLGA has succeeded in fulfilling its commitment to become an Autism Aware organisation. The training provided by the National Autism Team to staff members was useful and practical in enhancing understanding of the condition, and to make us aware of the small steps we can all take to make our own day-to-day communication more accessible and inclusive. I would urge any organisation interested in becoming Autism Aware to get in touch with the National Autism Team."

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Andrew Stephens, Executive Director of Data Cymru said:

“We decided to include autism awareness training as part of our staff development plan for 2018-19. Our staff found the training really useful, with much of it being directly applicable to our approach to dealing with our customers and colleagues.”

“We’re very pleased that we can now say that our staff are “Autism Aware”. The next step for us is to complete the HR scheme and become recognised as “Positive about working with autism.”

To find out more about the Autism Aware scheme, please visit [www.ASDinfoWales.co.uk](http://www.ASDinfoWales.co.uk).