

Autism and employment: putting policy into practice

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Today we will be looking at.....

- The role of the National Autistic Society and Prospects employment service.
- Key areas of policy relating to autism and employment
- How developments in policy are affecting provision of support for individuals with ASD
- How these issues relate to you and your organisations

The National Autistic Society



- UK's leading charity for people affected by autism
- Largest provider of specialist autism services. Staff and volunteers provide a lifeline for 100,000 people affected by autism every year
- Range of services include advice and information, education, residential and community, training and consultancy
- A very active policy and campaigns team working on issues from benefit reforms to getting the next 15% into employment

Prospects Employment Service



- The NAS employment service with offices in London, Glasgow and Cardiff
- Work with individuals with an ASD across a range of services from pre-employment support to In Work Support (retention)
- Services include training, consultancy, student support, graduate programme
- Increasing focus on partnership work

Strategic Action Plan (Wales)



- In 2008 Wales published an ASD strategy for Wales – a world first!
- Set out a clear direction for services, raising awareness and working partnership
- Robert Lloyd Griffiths named the first Autism Employment Ambassador
- Key focus on raising awareness within the workplace
- Have implemented an ASD charter for employers to sign

The Autism Strategy (England)



- Following lobbying from the autism community the Autism Act was signed in October 2009
- Strategy 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' was published in March 2010 followed by the guidance in December 2010
- Covered four key areas:
 - Training
 - Identification and diagnosis
 - Access to relevant services
 - Transition planning

The Autism Strategy (England)



Training of staff

- Available to all staff working in health and social care
- Specialist training for frontline staff

Identification and diagnosis

- Diagnosis part of an integrated service
- Important that adults given access to information about autism and sources of support

The Autism Strategy (England)



Access to relevant services

- Each local authority should ensure there is a joint commissioner/senior manager with a clear responsibility for adults with autism.
- Should be able to access direct payments and personal budgets

Transition planning

- Tailored to needs of individual
- Parent and young person informed of right to community care assessment

The Autism Strategy (Scotland)



- Following on from this the autism community in Scotland campaigned for a bill
- Went to parliament in Jan 2011 but fell at the 1st parliamentary stage
- Scottish Government is however bringing forward a an autism strategy investing £10 million over 4 years
- Likely to contain 26 recommendations however only one refers to employment support ('consider' impact of supported employment)
- Launch scheduled for October

Right to Control

- Intended to ensure that disabled people have choice, have control and achieve better outcomes
- Disabled people in 'trailblazer' areas can combine money from different state funding streams
- Tested in 7 areas over two year period: Barnet, Epsom & Ewell, Essex, Leicester, Newham, Reigate & Banstead, Sheffield, Barnsley, Stockport, Trafford, Oldham, Manchester, Bury

Right to Control - Prospects

- Contacted by DEA concerned that customer with ASD had no appropriate provision
- Have put together a bespoke package:
 - Preparatory workshops and 1:1 sessions
 - Work Experience placement
 - Jobfinding support 1:1
- Working with DEA and Trailblazer representative to write Support Plans

Case study – NAS East Midlands



- NAS has developed services in Northants, Leicester and Coventry which allows users to pay for support using Individual Budgets and Direct Payments.
- Amount of support varies from person to person eg. 2 hours through to full days
- Links in with other areas of NAS support such as social leisure activities
- Employment support is reduce or withdrawn as appropriate and funded hours are moved elsewhere in the week.

Good practice employer examples

- Specialisterne: 75% of workforce have ASD
www.specialisternescotland.co.uk
- BT: Internal ASD network led by staff with ASD
- HAO2: A social enterprise. Run a virtual office using Second Life technology. A number of both paid and unpaid staff with ASD
- Columba systems: Provide financial data for city firms, staff based at home. Log on for four hours a day

Further Information

- Prospects Employment Service:
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