

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Integrated Autism Service

Update for Services



Who Are We?

The Integrated Autism Service is a multi-agency specialist autism service, which is jointly hosted by health and social care.

The service combines two existing services – 'The Cardiff and Vale Autism Spectrum Service' (CAVASS) and 'Adult Autism Advice' (AAA) along with the appointment of new staff.

We are a multi-disciplinary team of health clinicians and local authority Autism Community Workers.

Why do we need a service?

Adults with autism without a learning disability or a significant mental health problem typically fall between gaps in services, and access to diagnostic assessments and support is variable nationally.

The Welsh Government has committed funding until 2021 to develop Integrated Autism Services in each Health Board in order to address the gaps in direct service provision and training and support to parents, carers and professionals.

Where will we be based?

We are based in Avon House in Penarth (on the same floor as the CMHT, Hafan Dawel). It is likely that we will offer appointments and groups from other bases in the future depending on need.

What will we be doing?

It is acknowledged that people with autism should be able to access autism-informed, timely support from mainstream health, local authority and third sector services, rather than having all their needs met by a specialist autism service. However, it is also recognised that mainstream services report a lack of skills, experience and flexibility to meet the needs of this client group.

Therefore, the role of our team is to work closely with partnership organisations across the care pathway to enable them to support people with autism, whilst also providing both individual and group support where service gaps exist.

• **Direct Work**

Diagnostic assessments of autism for adults without a learning disability.

Individual and group interventions for adults who would not otherwise be able to access mainstream services.

Support to parents and carers of adults with an autism diagnosis.

Support to parents and carers of children with an autism diagnosis

• **Indirect work**

Autism training to individuals working with people with autism, both general and more specialised.

Consultation, advice and support to professionals working with people with autism.

Joint working with other services where this will best meet the needs of the client.

Who can refer, how and when?

The IAS will act as a single point of access for referrals.

We accept referrals from all professionals for diagnostic assessments. Please contact us for our referral form or write a letter with sufficient information about reasons for referral. Currently, we do not take self-referrals for diagnostic assessments but instead ask that people go via their GP.

For those who already have a diagnosis: we accept referrals from professionals, self-referrals, and referrals from parents and carers. We may request to see evidence of a diagnosis. Referrals can be made by phone, email or in writing.

What is the process for diagnostic assessments?

We are going through changes in the way that the diagnostic process is undertaken. The details and processes are yet to be fully determined but we will update you accordingly. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

There is currently a wait for diagnostic assessments of approximately 6 months.

What specific services are we currently providing?

Diagnostic assessments for adults

Short-term, targeted, individual and group interventions which promote the independence and autonomy of adults with autism who have needs that cannot be met in existing services

Signposting to others services and support to access these services if required

A 6 week psycho-education post-diagnostic support group for adults with a diagnosis of autism. This is run jointly with Autism Spectrum Connections Cymru at 21 High Street, Cardiff.

A monthly adult Forum in Cardiff and one in Barry. The Forum is an open group for adults with a diagnosis with presentations from a range of speakers on topics of interest.

A Couples' Support Group that is run jointly with Cardiff University and provides a facilitated forum for couples where one or both the partners have a diagnosis of autism.

A 10 week Social Communication Group for adults.

Consultation and advice to professionals.

Joint working of complex cases, including assessments and interventions, with other services.

What services do we aim to provide in the longer term?

Training for professionals.

A 'Skills for Life' group for adults.

Groups to develop understanding and managing emotions for adults.

Groups and/ or workshops about autism and supporting someone with autism to parents and carers of adults.

Groups and/ or workshops about autism and supporting someone with autism to parents and carers of children.

The service will develop over time based on gaps in services.

What will we not be doing?

Diagnostic assessments of people under 18.

Urgent/emergency care, crisis intervention or rapid response.

Prescribing and/or on-going monitoring of medication.

Commissioning of services and individual care packages.

Long term therapy.

Respite for carers.

Care co-ordination or long-term care management of cases.

Why is it taking so long to be fully operational?

It has taken time to appoint the right people to positions, for staff to start and to have a work base. With the exception of the Team Manager and the Speech and Language Therapist, all staff are now in place.

We have a wide remit and are working across both child and adult services in health, social care and the third sector and we want to ensure that we are meeting identified need, as opposed to developing services that already exist. We are also thinking carefully about our pathways and processes to avoid future confusion.

We recognise that the wait and lack of clarity can be frustrating but please call or email us and we assure you that someone will get back to you and we will do our best to be as helpful as possible.

Thank you,

The IAS team

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