

**Your Voice Counts:
Sheffield Autistic Society Briefing**

**Feedback from:
NHS Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group
Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**



We will be working with Disability Sheffield to deliver training to GP practices to help ensure that services are accessible and meet people's communication and information needs.

The communication tips in the briefing are also being included in an online resource that we are producing to help GP practices to meet the Accessible Information Standard.

We have shared the report and information about training opportunities with GP practices across Sheffield with our staff.

Teams have been encouraged to discuss the report and to ensure that letters have clear headings and don't have big blocks of text.

When we meet with patients and relatives to discuss complaints and individual funding requests we will be aware of the sensory issues that people may face, and provide quiet places to wait and to meet.

We are in the process of updating our website to ensure that it is accessible and the helpful tips in the briefing have been incorporated into our project plan. We haven't made all the changes yet, but we're working on it.

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GP training: the CCG offers regular information days to GPs and the Trust's clinicians are involved in providing training on these days. We receive a very large number of referrals from GPs and these are usually very appropriate so I think they have a good idea about Autism.

From SAANS (Sheffield Adult Autism and Neurodevelopmental Service) point of view – we have worked hard to make our building autism friendly taking into account sensory needs etc. and we are careful to write letters/reports in a non-jargon and autism friendly way. We offer consultation and advice to other services including suggesting reasonable adjustments as appropriate.

The Sheffield Autism Partnership Board are working on their autism strategy which includes aiming to make Sheffield an official Autism Friendly City.

We are currently recruiting new staff and have implemented a new pathway to reduce waiting times. We are also working collaboratively with service users on projects to provide assistance whilst they are on the waiting list and also to help mental health services communicate appropriately with people with Aspergers/High Functioning Autism.



Sheffield Teaching Hospitals
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Your Voice Counts-Sheffield Autistic Society Feedback

Background

Healthwatch Sheffield attended three meetings run by Sheffield Autistic Society to listen to adults with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and their families/carers about their experiences of health and social care in Sheffield.

Healthwatch then provided a briefing following feedback from 17 people who noted the key themes as well as suggestions from attendees about how services could be improved for people with Autism.

There was positive feedback about the fantastic service at Sheffield Community and Special Care Clinic in Heeley, the briefing has been shared with the Lead Special Care Dentist and the team at Heeley. They were extremely pleased to receive this great feedback about their service.

Several of the key themes within the briefing paper relate to specialist autism services however there are some themes that we can action and share with the teams in order to improve care to adults with autism.

Areas of Good practice

Una Cunningham, Nurse Director for the Head and Neck Group in Sheffield teaching Hospitals is a member of the Autism Partnership Board, this group is looking to improve the lives of people with Autism. There are several key actions coming out of this group including training needs analysis and information about reasonable adjustments.

We have training available for all staff either face to face training or e learning

We have an internship scheme for young people with autism at Sheffield teaching Hospitals this offers young people an opportunity for training and work experience in a supported environment

We promote the document “How to support people with autism” in our clinical areas

When Sheffield Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust are made aware by an individual or informed via a referral that an individual has autism, every effort is made to put reasonable adjustments in place e.g. longer appointment times, funding carers to support individuals.

Key themes of the Briefing

Environment

- Staff are encouraged to find a suitable and comfortable environment depending on someone’s individual needs, this may include finding a quiet area/room/cubicles for someone to sit
- Some clinical areas have “noise ears”-to monitor the noise levels-it turns green –amber-red depending on noise levels. The nurse in charge will monitor the ear and ensure that when it turns red they take steps to try and reduce the noise where possible. But because this equipment is so visible everyone has a responsibility to be aware of the noise and the impact it has on patient care
- Bright Lights-at the present time the Trust does not fit dimmable switches as standard, and sometimes due to the nature of the clinical environment it may not be possible to reduce light. But where people find this difficult we encourage staff to make reasonable adjustment and find a more suitable environment if they can.
- Signage was raised as an issue, work to improve signage will be overseen by the “Patient Experience Committee” which Healthwatch are members.

Information

There is a trust wide working group reviewing the “Accessible Information Standards”. This is being led by the newly appointed trust lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This briefing has been shared with this group so that it can be taken into consideration.