

Regional Workshops

The National Autism Team working with the regions on the All-Age Autism Assessment Pathway



Overview

- The NHS England National Autism Team published [national framework and operational guidance for autism assessment services](#) in April 2023. This is aimed at helping Integrated Care Boards deliver improved outcomes in all-age autism assessment pathways
- The National Autism Team has agreed to attend regionally organised events for services that conduct autism assessments in each of the seven NHS England regions to provide further support assist systems and services to implement the guidance
- The team will share completed and ongoing work related to the autism assessment (and wider neurodevelopmental) pathway for all ages, including the results of a commissioned project. They will also facilitate discussions around this topic and other important issues that the regions have identified
- Each region will be at a different stage in addressing their autism (and wider neurodevelopmental) pathways and events will serve to share NHS updates and system-level tested innovation and solutions to consider across respective regions
- The colleagues visiting on behalf of the National Autism Team will be Dr Janine Robinson (National Specialty Adviser), and Dr Lou Thomas (Autism Research Manager), with potential additional attendees reflecting key topics identified by each region, to be discussed and agreed with regions.



Aims for the National Autism Team

- To establish and develop closer links with regional leads and other key regional colleagues and systems, to better understand the landscape, particular challenges and solutions
- To provide an update on related work completed or underway in the National Autism Team
- To disseminate the findings of a project (completed by Autistica and commissioned by NHS England) that exploring and evaluating tools used for screening and triage in the autism assessment (and wider neurodevelopmental) pathway
 - To support regional colleagues in evaluating tools used for screening and triage in the autism assessment (and wider neurodevelopmental) pathway, using the output of the commissioned project
 - To increase the extent to which there is agreement within and between services in each region around tool choice and screening and triage processes
 - To facilitate discussion within and between services about which tools and processes are used and why, by answering key questions identified by the NHS England National Autism Team
- To facilitate discussions around other important issues regarding the autism assessment (and wider neurodevelopmental) pathway that have been raised by regional colleagues
- To work with regions to identify which issues may need national perspective and which may be able to be addressed systematically at a regional level.



Logistics of the events – overview

- Regions are due to confirm whether events are to be held as in-person events or webinars, dependent on regional needs and preferences
- The National Autism Team is proposing to spend around four hours with regions for in-person sessions, and two hours for online sessions, with more opportunities for discussion and networking during in-person sessions
- Timetables for each session will be confirmed with regional leads and their teams as they co-create the agenda
- Regional leads will agree with colleagues on key objectives, actions and outcomes of these events.
- Proposed participants:
 - The National Autism Team recommends considering including regional leads, commissioners, clinical leads from services offering autism assessments and services that feed into their work, other referrers including GPs, education professionals and lived experience representatives from working groups.