



# ASD Support information for families & partner schools



**This booklet has been designed by SOFT family support workers in response to requests from our families and schools about first step ASD information and links to ASD support services in our area.**

**SOFT family support is not an ASD specific support service, we support all young people attending a partner school aged 4-12 years old to achieve their full potential in school.**

**In March 2022 SOFT will merge to become Speedwell Family Support, this will mean changes for how we deliver our services. We hope this booklet will continue to support our families by directing them to sources of ASD support throughout this transition period.**



### **This booklet includes:**

- **What does ASD mean?**
- **Overview of the stages of the statement process.**
- **ASD services in our local area who can help you.**

# What does ASD mean?

**ASD- means Autism Spectrum Disorder**

**'Spectrum' means autism affects different people in different ways. Autism can significantly and visibly impact every area of your life, or you may be 'high-functioning', and that impact is less obvious. So autism isn't like a light switch, which is either on or off. It's more like a dimmer switch, with many variations of brightness. That means no two people with autism are exactly alike.**

**Source: [beaconschoolsupport.co.uk](http://beaconschoolsupport.co.uk)**



**Autism is lifelong and affects the social and communication centre of the brain. Autism affects the way an individual relates to people, situations and the immediate environment. Many individuals with autism have difficulty processing everyday sensory information like sight, smells, touch, tastes and sounds.**

**Source: [www.autismni.org](http://www.autismni.org)**

# Overview of the stages of the statement process:

What is the process & Stages for assessment schools follow?

Initially there were 5 stages to the statutory assessment process followed by schools for a statement of special educational needs. This will officially change to a new 3 stage process as of September 2022, some schools have already begun to implement this:

**Stages 1 and 2-** identify SEN and arrange provision in school. Stage 1 • Child placed on school's SEN register. • Child gets extra help and their progress is monitored Stage 2 • Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) collects more information • Individual Education Plan is written Stage 3- follows when the child has a statement.

**Statutory assessment is also carried out at new stage 2\***

Videos on education rights and transitions are available on the NAS NI Facebook page here:  
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/499679070236614/960729261178597/>

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## **Stage 1-School delivered special educational provision**

- Child placed on SEN register • Personal Learning Plan (PLP) is prepared
- majority of SENs will be met through this Stage
- reasonable adjustments and additional strategies and approaches aimed at meeting and addressing the child's SEN Three Stage Model of Special Educational Provision Stage 2 - School delivered special educational provision plus external special educational provision is being implemented
- SEN register and PLP are updated
- school accesses resources, advisory and support services and training from EA
- reasonable adjustments, additional strategies and approaches plus resources, advice, guidance, support and training provided through the EA SEN support services to address the child's SEN
- if a child is not making progress, despite external support they may require a statutory assessment • includes the statutory assessment process by EA.

## **Stage 2 - School delivered special educational provision plus external special educational provision is being implemented**

- SEN register and PLP are updated
- school accesses resources, advisory and support services and training from EA
- reasonable adjustments, additional strategies and approaches plus resources, advice, guidance, support and training provided through the EA SEN support services to address the child's SEN
- if a child is not making progress, despite external support they may require a statutory assessment
- includes the statutory assessment process by EA

## **Stage 3 - The child has a Statement**

- SEN register and PLP are updated
- school and EA deliver special educational provision plus any
- relevant treatment or service identified by a HSC Trust
- responsibility lies with the school and the EA – with input from a HSC Trust where relevant
- reasonable adjustments, school delivered special educational provision plus EA provision as set out in the statement.

## **Personal Learning Plan (PLP) schools will be required to prepare and keep a PLP for each child that has SEN**

- provides a record of a child's SEN and the provision in place to help the child learn and make progress.
- includes expected outcomes the provision intends to achieve
- emphasises the importance of working in partnership with parents, young people and the views of children
- replaces IEPs (individual Education Plans)

**Source: National Autistic Society 16/12/2021**

### **Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 and accompanying regulations**

- What schools and EA must do for the child
- Parental rights
- Resolving disputes

### **Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs and Supplement**

- Guidance and examples of good practice to schools, EA and others
- EA and appropriate agencies must 'have regard to' code

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**

- Amends school leaving 'age' and statutory assessment.
- Remaining amendments due soon

# ASD services in our local area who can help you:

- **NAS Dungannon-** [nas@nas.org.uk](mailto:nas@nas.org.uk) local information and care across Northern Ireland for autistic children and adults, and their families. We offer health and social services including support in your home, short breaks and respite, social groups, relationship and health education, and parent groups.
- **Educational rights phone line:** 08088004102 (this phone line is run by volunteers so if you don't get through first time please do keep trying or leave a message)
- **Empower Project-** [www.empowernetwork.co.uk](http://www.empowernetwork.co.uk) focus of the project is to support children under 12 with Autism, Dyslexia and Dyspraxia, their parents and the wider family circle to enhance confidence and learn together to develop skills to support their children. They have online programmes and an information line available at least 30 hours per week on 02895816852.
- **Middle Town Centre for Autism-**[www.middletownautism.com](http://www.middletownautism.com) Enhance the lives of children and young people with autism and their families, through the delivery of specialist educational Autism services. 028 3751 5750
- **AUsome Kids-** 07342 834747 41A Molesworth Street Cookstown Co Tyrone BT80 8NX. A safe and inclusive space within our community, where children with autism and their families can grow and develop together; learning to accept and celebrate their ASD
- **Autism NI-** 028 9040 1729 [www.autismni.org](http://www.autismni.org), Helpline, early intervention, family support, support groups & training.
- **Sunflower Support NI-** [Sunflowersgrowingtogether@gmail.com](mailto:Sunflowersgrowingtogether@gmail.com) Volunteer led support group for people with additional needs and their carers.
- **Team Aspie-**07707037466 social group for 11 to 18 yrs old with Asperger's syndrome . Our wide range of activities and adventures provide support , skills and fun.