



6. Existing Services and Systems

If you have an autistic spectrum diagnosis or think you may be on the autistic spectrum there are a number of options for gaining support.

The purpose of the Leeds Adult Autism strategy (2011-2014) is to improve the well being of people on the spectrum. This will mean in some cases increasing the range and capacity of services and supports. We will aim to update this list at 6 monthly intervals to include any changes.

This edition was accurate to the best of our knowledge on November 29th 2011.

6.1 Accessing Support

There are two main ways to access support if you are currently not receiving services:

- Talk to your GP who will discuss your needs with you. They could refer you for a diagnosis or could advise you to try for a social care assessments or to contact a support group.

From September 2011 there is an Autism Diagnostic Service available in Leeds.

The service is a six month pilot which has been funded by NHS Leeds. The service is currently funded for diagnostic purposes only but service users will be provided with information on autistic spectrum conditions and will be signposted to other relevant services. Leeds Autism Diagnostic Service will accept referrals for all IQ levels where autistic spectrum conditions are suspected. For a referral form please contact Denise Spenceley tel 0113 305 5350.

- Ring the adult social care contact centre who will either refer you for an assessment or sign post you to other services. You are legally entitled to a social care assessment if you have an autism diagnosis but you will only receive paid for support if you are assessed as being FACS eligible – for example, if you have a sufficient level of need. Phone 0113 222 4401.
- Children with diagnosed disabilities and FACS eligible needs will be referred to the transitions team at 14 years old. This team will support them (until they are 25 if necessary) to find suitable supports as an adult. If you think this applies to you, you can ring the transitions team on 0113 395 1617 for further information.

6.2 Supports you can use

Decisions about who should receive social care services are based on an assessment of the risks to both immediate and long term independence. This is sometimes called a FACS eligibility assessment. If you are eligible adult social care will do an assessment to find out how much support you need to meet your needs. You will be told how much your

personal budget will be and you can choose to manage this money yourself or you can ask social care to manage it on your behalf. You can use your own money to purchase support if the providers think that they can support you. The sort of things you can spend your personal budgets or direct payments on are accommodation, day support or outreach support either through a provider or by recruiting your own personal assistant(s). You can use autism specific or non autism specific supports.

A relatively high proportion of people with severe and profound learning disabilities will have autism so many of the accommodation and day services for people with learning disabilities will be supporting people on the spectrum. Information on learning disability services can be found on www.through-the-maze.org.uk

Mental health services will also be supporting people with autism. Information on mental health services can be found on www.mentalhealthleeds.info

There are some autism specific services. Two of them have written their own descriptions:

Leeds Autism Services (LAS) is an organisation which offers autism-specific services for adults; it has 2 daytime resource centres, an outreach service and a 7-bed residential service. We strive to ensure people are able to access the activities of their choosing - some examples of sessions on offer include augmentative language and communication skills, cross-curricular computer aided learning, horticulture, dance and drama, music, supported work placements, art and craft, textiles, life skills, cookery, and outdoor/community based activities. LAS is accredited by the National Autistic Society. Queries and initial interest in

placement should be directed to:
Pete Hughes, Team Leader Day Services
tel 0113 279 7080 email tlday@las.uk.net

Specialist Autism Services (previously known as Sacar) specifically design autistic spectrum conditions learning programmes, have approximately 80 places across two sites providing a city wide service for people with autism and Asperger's, There is a varied workshop programme underpinned by social skills, interaction and communication support. This involves employment support, an outreach service, autistic spectrum conditions awareness \ training provision, all of which enables and increases independence.

Accommodation services

Autism supported living framework: 5 care and support providers have been quality assured to provide supported living for people on the spectrum. Care managers or individuals with personal budgets can use the framework to source support.

The providers are:

- Creative Support
- Dimensions
- Home Farm Trust
- Real Life Options
- UBU

6.3 Open Access - Social Support

If you aren't eligible for social care services you can get support from these groups

Leeds Asperger's Adults: monthly support meetings for people with autism (meets jointly with carers). Meets first Tuesday of the month 6.45 at Leeds Civic Hall or ring Margaret Tait 0113 265 8957 for further information.

Kaleidoscope Forum

"Celebrating Autism /Aspergers/

‘Developmental Differences’ and Unique Individuality in Higher Education”

This meeting is open to staff, students, or anyone in the community, who has an interest or passion for raising awareness around Autism, Aspergers, Developmental Differences etc. Meets at Leeds Met University. This academic year, meets once a month, between Headingley campus and City campus, for more details and information contact Sue Dominey email: counselling@leedsmet.ac.uk

6.4 Carers support

Carers are entitled to a social care assessment of their own needs which might entitle them to respite or other support. Ring the contact centre 0113 222 4401 for more information.

Aspergers Carers Support Group, for carers supporting an adult with Aspergers Syndrome. Meet every month to share experiences and to support each other to reduce carer stress. For further details, please contact Cathal O’Riordan LPFT Mental Health Carers Team 0113 295 4445 or Angie Thompson Carers Leeds 0113 246 8338.

Leeds Asperger’s Adults: monthly support meetings for people with autism (meets jointly with carers). Meets first Tuesday of the month 6.45 at Leeds Civic Hall or ring Margaret Tait 0113 265 8957 for further information.

Leeds ABC – a voluntary group offering ongoing support to families with children and young adults who have or are awaiting a diagnosis of autism/Asperger’s syndrome. They offer monthly support group meetings, family swim sessions, youth group for 11-18 year olds, workshops, and advice and support on educational matters, Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Employment Support Allowance (ESA).

6.6 Specialist support within mainstream services

Education

The three Leeds universities have disability support units which will support people with autism. Leeds City College also supports about 40 people with autism.

Employment

There are new agencies in place in Leeds to deliver employment support. At the time of writing there is no information about autism specialist supports.

6.7 Children’s services

This strategy covers adults and young people in transition. Children’s services include specialist education provision within Education Leeds and support from within children’s disabilities services. There are also support groups and sessional events. More detailed information on this can be found on the Family Hub. <http://www.thefamilyhubleeds.org>