

# The Greater Manchester Autism Consortium

## Website update –November 2008

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the annual update of the Autism GM website which gives a summary of the developments within the Greater Manchester Consortium.

### KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The following is a summary of developments that have taken place within the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities within the past 10 months. The information has been provided by members of each of the development groups in the area and is by no means exhaustive.

#### **1. *Autism Services Development Groups***

The Multi-agency Autism Services Development Groups are regularly meeting in **Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford and Wigan**. Apart from **Oldham, Rochdale and Bury**, all the other authorities have separate groups for children and adults now. **Tameside, Trafford** and **Stockport** have not been having regular development group meetings but have been other development activity in most of those areas.

#### **2. *Identification, Assessment and Diagnosis***

There are currently working groups on ASD Diagnostic Care Pathways for children in **Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Stockport, Trafford** and **Wigan**. A number of the groups have been sharing information and ideas with each other through the FSDP Project Officers and in April 2008 Mari and Debbie shared good practice in relation to the development of post-diagnostic support within the consortium at the Annual Consortium Convention.

**Bolton, Manchester and Stockport** have been looking into diagnosis for adults but are still at the stage of discussion.

Mari Saeki and Dougal Hare (University of Manchester) are currently strengthening the case for a Greater Manchester Asperger Syndrome Diagnostic Service following a meeting with the North West Strategic Health Authority's Specialist Commissioner and a local Mental Health Commissioner. This updated proposal should be ready in winter 2008.

#### **3. *Early Intervention and workshops for parents***

**Bolton and Wigan** are still offering the NAS Early Bird programme to parents of pre-school children who receive a diagnosis of ASD. **Bolton** are also running the Early Bird Plus programme which is for parents of children up to the age of 7yrs. **Salford** has now had the training to run the Early Bird Plus programme which will run from Springwood School.

**Bury, Manchester, Oldham and Rochdale** are regularly running post-diagnostic workshops for parents of children who have had a recent diagnosis. **Manchester** is now running the workshops several times a year in North, Central and South. They are also working on a workshop for BME families which is hoped will run as a help! pilot.

In **Stockport** the Joshua Short Foundation continues to provide a set of post-diagnostic workshops. The foundation was also able to fund child care for the children with ASDs and their siblings as well paying local professionals to deliver the workshops. This meant that there was something for the whole family and this was much appreciated by the participants of the workshops.

The NAS *help!* team offer free post-diagnostic workshops for parents of children with ASDs who have had a recent diagnosis. The North West team has delivered several programmes within Greater Manchester including:-

- A 20 hour programme in Wigan in September 2007
- A 2 day help programme in Trafford in December 2007
- A one day help programme in Rochdale in December 2007
- A one day help programme in Oldham in March 2008
- A one day help programme in Bolton/ Bury in May 2008
- A 20 hour programme in Rochdale in June/July 2008

In addition, the North West help Officers have also delivered the following Seminars within Greater Manchester in the past year:

- An "Adult Life" help2 seminar in Wilmslow in January 2008
- 2 Help 2 seminars in Bolton in February 2008

Extra help programmes were run in Rochdale thanks to the fundraising by a group of Rochdale parents.

#### **4. Education**

Francine Brower, Regional Coordinator for the North has been running regular professional forums for teachers who work with children with ASD in mainstream or resourced provision. The meetings provide teachers with support for one another and a chance to share good practice.

**Bury and Oldham** still provide regular parent drop-ins re education issues. **Bury** now has a secondary ASD resource provision.

#### **5. Social Skills groups**

**NAS Greater Manchester Service** now run a social skills group called Social Eyes and **ASGMA/Aspirations** are also running a 10 week social skills group for their members.

**Manchester** CAMHS occasionally also run social skills group for 10-13 year olds.

The 6 week social skills course called "Keeping Safe" provided by the NAS's has been delivered in **Oldham** and **Bury** following the successful pilot last year in **Tameside**. The course teaches young people with ASD aged 11- 16 how to avoid risky situations and also to inform them about the criminal justice system.

## **6. Leisure and Short Breaks**

The ASD youth groups in **Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Salford** are all going from strength to strength.

**Bury** ran a successful pilot of the Sibling sessions in January 2008 and spoke about it at the Consortium Convention in April 2008. There is now a sibling group which meets monthly.

**Rochdale** is in the process of planning for sibling sessions and also hopes to have a sibling group in partnership with Family Welfare Association.

**Bolton** was successful in attaining pathfinder status for the Aiming High initiatives and is currently running a group to look at proposals for the ASD group

The **Stockport** Trampolining group meets most days and has also extended into Didsbury, Manchester and remains very popular.

ASGMA- *Aspirations* are still running a large number of activities and groups from their Stretford base for people with Asperger Syndrome who are 10 years+. They are also involved in a number of groups within Greater Manchester. The base has recently been refurbished and can now offer the following facilities:-

- Art room
- Games room
- Music room
- IT suite
- Meeting rooms

All details on activities can be found on [www.asgma.org.uk](http://www.asgma.org.uk)

ASGMA will be celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the society in October.

Leisure for Autism has had a number of play schemes running in Manchester, Stockport, Salford, Trafford and Wigan this summer.

**Special Virtuosi** have grown from strength to strength and have several people with ASD in the group. The group performed at the Consortium Convention in April 2008. Their website is [www.specialvirtuosi.org.uk](http://www.specialvirtuosi.org.uk)

Manchester Camerata and the Royal Exchange Theatre have run an after-school project for 10-13yrs olds with Aspergers syndrome during the Autumn Term. Their website address is [www.manchestercamerata.com](http://www.manchestercamerata.com)

## **7. Transition**

Person-Centred 14 plus Reviews are increasingly in use in various settings. In particular **Manchester** and **Salford** are using this way to carry out reviews.

Several authorities now run transition information events for parents of children who want to find out what is available for their child in adult services.

**Tameside** Connexions have funded a project to work with a small group of students with ASD moving from mainstream high school to college. Julia Butcher is the worker on this and will be working on this project until October 2008 when she will write up the project.

The project continues to update **AS INFORM** and this is available the Consortium website [www.autismgm.org.uk](http://www.autismgm.org.uk)

## **8. Employment Support and Student Support**

Sadly the NAS's employment support service, Prospects, has lost a number of funding streams in the past year which means that despite high demands for this service there is almost no employment support available by Prospects in the region. However, the student support side of Prospects has grown to two days a week in Manchester University, half a day a week in Manchester Metropolitan University and half a day a week in Salford University.

Increasingly all the Greater Manchester Supported Employment services are working with people with ASDs. Some people with ASD cannot gain access to these services though because the services only work with those eligible for services from Social Services and many people with ASD fall outside of this eligibility criteria.

Two services in particular have been mentioned to the project as working well with adults with ASD. **Stockport's** supported Employment Service Pure Innovations and **Bury's** Employment Support Service BEST.

## **9. Housing Options**

**Salford** is working on a second ASD specific service for 3 adults with ASD. The first house known as Monton House was opened last year and a presentation was made about this house at the Consortium Convention in April 2008. Salford have also implemented a model of support that will enable those who can live independently with less support receive help from the staff who work in the ASD specific supported house.

Housing continues to be a high priority for adults with ASD.

## **10. Parent Support Groups and the Parent Resource Network**

Groups in **Bolton, Oldham, Tameside** and **Stockport** are still meeting regularly.

There is another new group in **Rochdale** run by parents which makes the total number of parent groups in Rochdale to 3.

ASGMA's parent support group for parents of children and adults with Asperger's Syndrome continue to meet monthly.

The Greater Manchester Parent Resource Network continues to provide much needed support to parents.

## **11. Autism Accreditation**

**Oldham's** supported tenancies, day services and short-breaks service are now accredited and continue to maintain this status.

**Bolton** and **Salford** are still working on their accreditation but reviews are underway soon.

## **12. Training**

**Stockport** has done some work on devising a training strategy for professionals working with children with ASD.

**Manchester** is currently auditing training needs within the city and **Rochdale** has also decided to prioritise training this year.

The Greater Manchester Consortium Training Strategy group devised a 6 session Sibling workshop. As stated earlier this was very successfully piloted by Bury in January/ February 2008. Information on this can be sought through the FSDP. The group is now looking at peer-awareness raising issues.

Mari has brought together another group to look at devising training for those who are carrying out social care assessments for adults with ASD. This group hopes to report back in 2009.

There continues to be a large number of training events around Greater Manchester provided by a number of providers and/or services. Lists of training are available in the Autism GM newsletters posted on this website.

## **GENERAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Francine Brower is leaving her post as NAS Regional Co-ordinator for the North in November. She is currently line-managing a number of new posts as well as both Regional Officers (North West and North East and Yorkshire and Humber) and the Greater Manchester project.

Clare Hughes (Regional Officer North West) returned from maternity leave in February 2008. Gaynor Dale has now taken the new second post of Regional Officer North West but with specific responsibility for Branches and Support groups

The North West help! team, Dave Scowcroft and Suzie Franklin, are now managed by Francine under the recent regionalisation of the NAS's "National Services" which consist of Help, Social Programmes and Befriending.

The regional team is involved in a range of development across the region including participating in Autism Services Development Groups, holding conferences and events, advising on development of services, chairing interest groups and forums and supporting branches.

Debbie Waters has also taken on some additional roles for the wider regions including involvement in the Care Services Improvement Partnership's work on Identification, Diagnosis and Assessment of Autism alongside two other people working on the project. The report will be published in November

Mari Saeki and Andrew Powell (Support Programmes Co-ordinator for the NAS) have had a booklet on assessment and ASD published to support the current I exist campaign. The booklet is designed for social workers and those carrying out assessment.

## **AUTISMGGM NEWSLETTER AND WEBSITE**

There have been 3 newsletters this year. The website was updated and re-launched in April 2008 to ensure that it is more user-friendly and reflects what is going on within the consortium. This is possible thanks to a volunteer with Asperger Syndrome who maintains and updates the website.

The Project leaflet was updated in late 2007 and there has recently been another mail shot to diagnosticians to distribute this.

Mari Saeki and Debbie Waters  
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