

BASW England and the Autism Alliance

‘What A Good Care Needs
Assessment Looks Like’

part of the Homes not Hospitals webinar series

Tuesday, 27th October 2020

[#swlistening](#)

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The professional association for
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Introduction and Background



Liz Howard

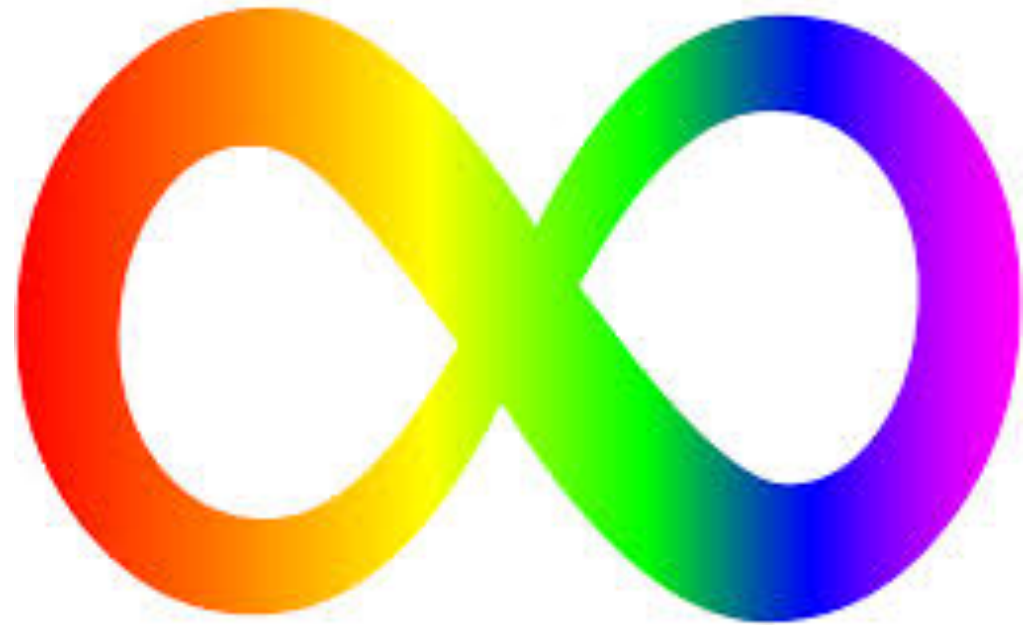
Professional Officer BASW
England

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Caroline Howson

- **Sharing lived experience of the care needs assessment**





Assessment Checklist

Debbie Austin
Trainer

What Does A Good Care Needs Assessment Look Like?

Debbie Austin

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75% of Local Authorities offered their staff less than
1-day training on autism
Two thirds of local authorities told us they were not
using autism specific assessment tools

(Source Autism Alliance)

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Guide to carrying out a Care Needs Assessment for Health and Social Care Professionals

The Autism Alliance is a network of 16 autistic charities supporting thousands of adults and children affected by autism across the UK. We strive to support, raise awareness and increase understanding of Autism Spectrum Conditions throughout the UK to allow all affected by autism to lead productive and fulfilling lives.

The Autism Alliance have produced a guide, the Know your Rights campaign so autistic people know their rights under the law and best practice as written in the Autism Act 2009, Care Act 2014 – the duty to promote well-being, Autism Strategy - 'Think Autism', the statutory guidance by the Department of Health in supporting the fulfilling of the Autism Strategy, The Equality Act 2010 – the duty to make reasonable adjustments. We have also produced a helpful guide for local authority statutory obligations.

We have now produced a guide to support all health and social care professionals whilst carrying out a care needs assessment, this is compliant with all of the above legislation.

The guide provides an overview of key elements to consider whilst taking a care needs assessment for autistic people/ND and outlines the law under the Autism Act 2009, the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance, Chapter 6: Assessment and Eligibility as well as relevant legislation.

The guide is intended to carry out a care needs assessment, as set out in Regulation

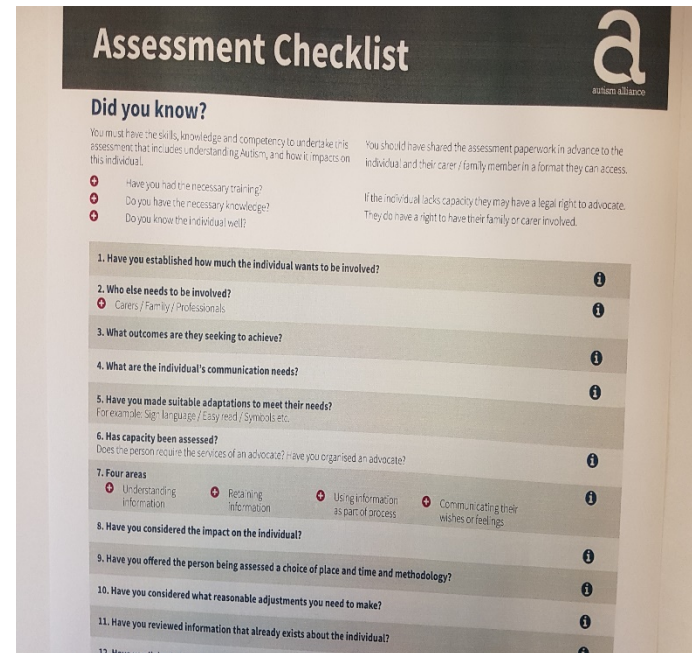
1. Involvement in care

The assessment should be conducted in a way that respects the individual's wishes and preferences. The assessment should be conducted in a way that respects the individual's wishes and preferences. The assessment should be conducted in a way that respects the individual's wishes and preferences.

Putting the person at the heart of the assessment is crucial to understanding their needs, and delivering the best outcomes for their wellbeing, and delivering the best outcomes for their wellbeing, and delivering the best outcomes for their wellbeing.

Understanding their own needs and the impact of their condition is essential to allow them to effectively engage in the assessment process.

Understand the basis on which the assessment is conducted.



Guide to carrying out a care needs assessment

1. Involvement in choice

- the assessment should be person centred throughout
- Do they want to be involved in the assessment?
- How will the assessment impact them? Can be stressful. Consider any reasonable adjustments
- Establish the persons communication needs and adapt the assessment accordingly
- Capacity issues - if any concern an assessment of capacity should be carried out under the mental capacity act (MCA)

2. Reasonable adjustments

- Consider communication needs.
- Anxiety levels.
- Any co- occurring conditions such as Intellectual disability, anxiety, epilepsy
- Work collaboratively with others and share information
- Consider what support that person has already
- Are their issues/symptoms being masked/hidden.
- Get to know the person
- Remember – avoid making assumptions about a person’s strengths and limitations

3. Strengths of the autistic individual

- Consider the persons own strengths and capabilities.
- Autism is not just about deficits – remember the strengths – what can people do to improve their lives with a little support
- Encourage use of specific gifts and talents—good for wellbeing and managing anxiety.
- Consider any spiritual needs and networks to promote wellbeing and quality of life.

4. Autism

- A lifelong neurological condition
- Consider sensory needs, Sight, sound, smell, taste, touch
- May be over or under responsive to sensory stimuli
- **Reasonable adjustments**
 - dimmed lighting
 - Refrain from strong perfume
 - Quiet environment

5. Behavioural

- Positive behaviour support.
- Why do people do what they do?
- Work in a positive and proactive way
- Looking at least restrictive option where possible
- Minimise use of restrictive practice when supporting people who display behaviours which challenge.
- Remember - All behaviours serve a purpose and all behaviour communicates something..

6. Medication

- There is no medication to treat “Autism”
- Medication often used to treat symptoms of irritability in autism
- STOMP initiative
- People may be on medication to manage Anxiety or depression and that can be helpful
- Remember - co-occurring conditions such as anxiety or depression very common in autistic people

- **7. Wellbeing principles**
- **What keeps people well**
- Difficulties can be more subtle in terms of being able to thrive and function independently.
- Can have good and bad days in terms of functioning
- Price to masking – exhaustion, autism fatigue and burnout
- Many autistic adults need prompting with nutrition and personal care needs and other daily living skills. Others may not
- Are they able to access and engage in work
- Are they lonely or isolated?
- Remember - Understand what is important to that person

8. Family Approach

- Consider the impact on the wider family
- Many elderly parents are taking on the parenting role into later life
- Think about wellbeing for the whole family
- Are any children involved in providing care
- Remember - link up with other organization's where necessary

9. Training

- Assessors must undergo regular, up to date training on a regular basis
- The training must be appropriate to the assessment
- Assessors must also have the skills and knowledge to carry out an assessment relating to a specific condition or circumstances requiring expert insight e.g. autism and mental health needs

Do you understand autism?(4, 8, 11, 18,19)



Do I need to do further training?

- You must have the skills knowledge and competency to undertake this assessment
- Do you know what autism is?
- Do you know how this can affect an individual?
- Do you know this individual well?
- Have you reviewed information that already exists about the individual that communicates specific needs?
- High functioning adults very good at masking and hiding their autism and appearing “capable”
- Remember –Many adults are undiagnosed

Do I understand autistic peoples care needs?

- Care cannot not be refused based on IQ
- Assessment should focus on communication, processing and sensory needs.
- Can they maintain a habitable home? How do you do that?
- Social and communication needs – do they want to work? Any barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment?
- What are their strengths?
- How can I facilitate this?
- Look at how the person functions with and without support
- Many could have had support from parents or other carers, can mask their ability to function.
- Remember - Make sure people know their rights, right to an assessment from a competent assessor, right to challenge the decision

Do I understand reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act?

- Give people time to prepare
- A copy of the assessment paperwork should be sent in advance to enable the person **time to prepare** for the assessment
- Consider the length of the assessment
- Discuss with them **where they want to meet, what adjustments do they need?**

Your duty to Involve (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 12, 15)

Do I understand that autistic people have the right to be involved and have someone advocate for them?

- How much they want to be involved?
- Have they had enough time to prepare?
- What do they need? Any reasonable adjustments?
- Have you Involved those people that know them?
- Do they understand the questions?
- Do they have capacity? Do they need an advocate?
- Have you liaised with other agencies/professionals?
- **Remember - Autistic people should be involved and asked what they need**

Do I know this individual well?

- Have you **spent time getting to know** the person?
Communication needs? What are their strengths as well as areas of difficulty?
- **What life do they want to lead?**
- Have you asked the person what is important to them?
- Refrain from making assumptions about them or their autism.
- **Specific interests or passions.**
- Remember - The assessment should identify the outcomes **they** wish to achieve.

- Have you had the necessary training in order to assess autistic people?
 - Do you have the necessary skills and knowledge about autism? If not, what do I need to do to develop it?
 - Do you know the individual well? You must spend time getting to know the person

- Have you shared the assessment paperwork in advance to the individual and their carer/family member?
- Is the paperwork in a format they can understand?
- Make sure autistic people and their families know their rights under the Autism Act and the Care Act.



Research carried out by the Autism Alliance

Mary Simpson
Chair of the
Autism Alliance



Autism Alliance Survey

- 77% of local authorities told us the tool they were using is not autism specific.
- 24% of local authorities told us they only provide 1 day of training.
- 76% had only met their assessor on the day.
- 80% did not receive any paperwork or copy of the assessment in advance.
- 45% of people were not able to invite people who are important to them.
- Only 2% were offered an advocate despite 42% saying that they
- needed one.

Care Needs Assessments

- Most care needs assessments used by local authorities are not autism specific.
- Generic assessments are used for a wide range of conditions, these assessments do not detail an individual's autism and how this impacts on their daily lives.
- The Care Act is clear that the assessors must have the skills, knowledge, and experience to undertake assessments and the tool used should be specific to the condition they are assessing.

Training

- Para 6.86 of the Care Act 2014 states “assessors undergo regular, up-to-date training on an ongoing basis.
- Assessors must be appropriately trained, with the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out an assessment.
- This training must be maintained throughout their career. As part of maintaining their registration.
- They must have the skills and knowledge to carry out an assessment of need that relate to the condition they are assessing

Government fails to transform care for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism

- Mencap demands an end to the 'human rights scandal' that is keeping over 2,000 people with learning disability and/or autism locked away – 16% for over 10 years.
- Over 2,000 children and adults with a learning disability still detained in inpatient units
- Number of **children** has more than **doubled to 240**
- 2,605 uses of restrictive interventions e.g. physical restraint in one month
- Average time in inpatient units away from home for people with a learning disability and/or autism is **over 5 years**
- 16% of people in an ATU have been there **more than 10 years**

Mencap 2019



Out of Sight – Who Cares?

Seclusion

- Individuals spent between 2 days and 7 months in seclusion
- Long term segregation from 3 days to 13 years
- 71% had been in segregation or seclusion for 3 months or longer
- Some had been in hospital for more than 25 years

A Good Care Needs Assessment

Under the Care Act 2014 assessors must consider the following:

- Associated conditions (dyspraxia, dyslexia, ADHD, epilepsy etc)
- Anxiety
- Social Communication
- Social interaction and relationships
- Language and communication
- Sensory
- Psychological and emotional wellbeing
- Masking
- Challenging behaviour

How do we fix this situation?

- Eutopia would be to have a person-centred, autism specific assessment that clearly identifies needs with each practitioner carrying out a care needs assessment being trained to the highest standard.

As this does not exist what can we do here and now?

- We can create an autism specific assessment that clearly identifies the needs of autistic people.
- We need to ensure all local authorities are using these assessments to ensure there is no postcode lottery.
- We need to ensure all practitioners carrying out care needs assessments receive training to the highest possible standard.

Helpful Organisations

- **Autism Alliance** - <https://www.autism-alliance.org.uk/>
- **Ipssea** - <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/ehc-needs-assessments>
- **Sossen** - <https://www.sossen.org.uk/>
- **Contact.org** - [https://contact.org.uk/media/1534561/extra help in education for 19-25-year-olds.pdf](https://contact.org.uk/media/1534561/extra_help_in_education_for_19-25-year-olds.pdf)
- **Special needs jungle**
https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/members/meet-our-members/special-needs-jungle?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIpY6vmb7-6wIVkOntCh2JvwjQEAAAYASAAEgl2_vD_BwE

Andrew Powell – Bristol Autism Spectrum Service

Avon and Wiltshire 
Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

Bristol Autism Advice Service

- Recently established initiative – aims to be a one-stop shop providing:
 - Signposting
 - Problem-solving/advice
 - Group interventions – currently anxiety management, mindfulness, problem-solving
- Staffed by BASS & professionals from agencies across care pathway via secondments
- Accessible by anyone with autism in Bristol
- **Aim is to increase social inclusion & keep people away from MH/social care services**



Andrew Powell - BASS

- **Nearly 30 years in autism**
- **NHS Specialised Services, Bristol Autism Spectrum Service**
- **Seen about 4000 adults with autism since 2010**
- **Legal right to Care Act assessment**
- **The most complex people; Not for amateurs**
- **Person centred means strawberry milk**
- **High vulnerability from financial abuse to suicide attempts**
- **Low level long term support is required**

The capabilities statements, implementation resources and work with organisations

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The capabilities statements,
CPD pathway and easy read resources

Capabilities Statement for social work with autistic adults

Implementation
resources:

toolkits for social workers,
organisations, people with
lived experience and
educators

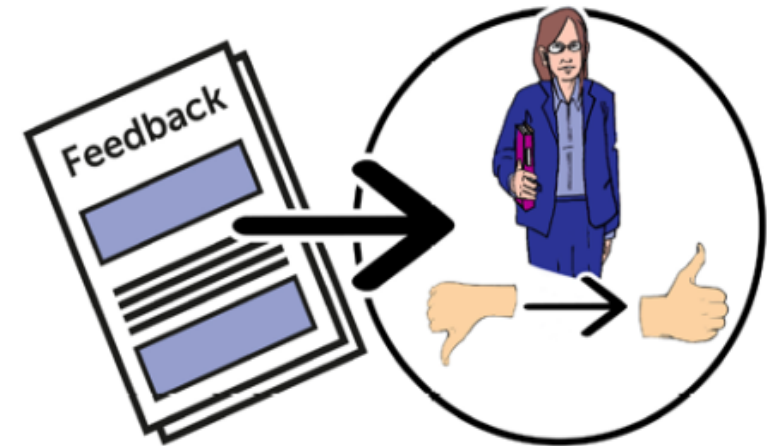
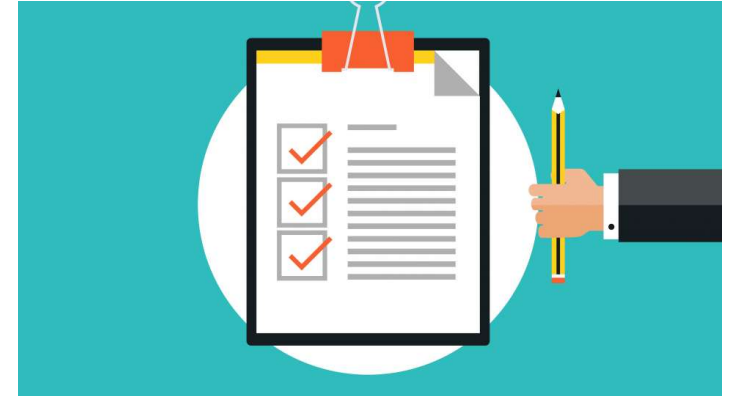
Capabilities Statement for adults with learning disability

Implementation
resources:

toolkits for social workers,
organisations, people with
lived experience and
educators

Resources for people and families

- **Information sheets** explaining the role of the social worker
- **Feedback resources** focusing on their experience of social work.
- **Easy read material** explaining how to use the resources.



Organisation self-assessment tool

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Organisational Self-Assessment Tool: Social Work Capabilities Statements for Staff Supporting People with Learning					Disabilities and/or Autistic Adults					
1	1. Specialist LD Teams	Date of 1st iteration:				Date of 2nd iteration:				
2		DD/MM/YY				DD/MM/YY (6ms after first iteration)				
3			Yes, No, N/A (or scale)	Comments	Actions		Y/N	Comments	Feedback from social workers and the social worker toolkit	Feedback from people with learning disabilities, autistic adults, and/or their families
4										
5										
6	Communications									
7										
8	Is the CS and/or the CPD pathway available on organisational intranet?									
9	Are the supporting resources - toolkits, critical friend tool, and videos - available?									
10	Is the CS/CPD pathway available in hard copy in offices?									
11	Is the CS/CPD pathway available via external links (e.g. to BASW website)?									
12	Are people with learning disabilities informed about the CSs/CPD pathway?									
13	On a scale 1-5 (with 1 being the least visible), how would you rate the visibility of the CS/CPD pathway?									
14	Overall, on a scale on 1-5 (with 1 being low, and 5 being high), how well is your organisation doing on communicating about the CSs?									
15										
16	Operational Practice									
17										
18	Is the CS/CPD pathway discussed in 1:1s/supervision?									
19	Is the CS/CPD Pathway discussed in									



What is in the Organisation self-assessment?



- A guide to support organisations to show how the capabilities statements can be used in practice
- Questions to help organisations to set a benchmark of where they are in relation to the Capabilities Statements and supporting resources
- A template to capture and identify improvements to service delivery and workforce learning and development.
- A way of providing assurances to people, families, partnership boards and elected members about ways of working, impact and outcomes.



Questions & Answers



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Important Information

- <https://www.autism-alliance.org.uk/resources-2/>
- <https://www.basw.co.uk/capabilities/autistic-adults/resources/toolkit/role-social-worker-autistic-adults>
- <https://www.basw.co.uk/capabilities/adults-with-learning-disabilities/resources>

- **Future webinars:**
www.basw.co.uk/events

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Thank You!