



SCD/ASD

Position Statement for Children & Young People with Social & Communication Difficulties/Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Wiltshire County Council

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CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	3
Joined Up Working	3
Definition	4
Incidence	4
(a) Mild SCD/ASD	5
(b) Moderate SCD/ASD	5
(c) Severe SCD/ASD	6
(d) Extreme SCD/ASD	6
What Educational provision is there for CYP with SCD/ASD?	7
What Early Years provision is there in Wiltshire?	7
What are our ambitions for Early Years provision?	8
What Primary provision is there in Wiltshire?	8
What are our ambitions for Primary Mainstream Education?	9
What Secondary Level provision is there?	9
What are our ambitions for Secondary Mainstream Education?	9
What Special School provision is there?	10
What are our ambitions for Special School Education?	10
What 16+ provision is there?	11
What are our ambitions for 16+ Services?	11
Provision	12
Contacts	13
Glossary	14

Position Statement for Social & Communication Difficulties / Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Introduction

This position statement defines Social and Communication Difficulties/Autistic Spectrum Disorder (SCD/ASD) describes current EDUCATION provision and sets out developments to be undertaken in the foreseeable future. Its purpose is to promote a shared understanding within Wiltshire amongst parents and carers and staff who work with children and young people with SCD/ASD. Position statements are not consultation documents, however, comments on provision and plans for the future are welcome and will be taken into account when developments are planned.

All Wiltshire services aim:

- for all children and young people, as far as possible, to be brought up by their own families, in their local community, and receive education at the nearest appropriate Early Years setting, school or college.
- to implement the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 – taking account of and reflecting the needs of all Wiltshire children and young people irrespective of ability, age, ethnic background, geographical location, gender and socio-economic status;
- to support Inclusion through early identification, assessment and intervention;
- to act in ways that will promote the Five Outcomes set out in Every Child Matters/Change for Children; (Enjoy and Achieve; Stay Safe; Be Healthy; Achieve Economic Well being; and Make a Positive Contribution), for all Wiltshire children and young people.

Joined Up Working

We recognise that children and young people with SCD/ASD often need support from more than purely educational resources. We are committed to working in partnership with health and social care colleagues to ensure that children and families receive the co-ordinated support they need to achieve the five outcomes set out in ‘Every Child Matters/Change for Children’: Enjoy and Achieve; Stay safe; be Healthy; Achieve Economic Well being; and Make a positive Contribution. New systems (eg Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professional) are being tried out and will be introduced across the county in future years. Immediately, information on Social Care Services may be found in “What to do if children and young people need additional help; a guide for service providers” or by going to www.WiltshirePathways.org and selecting “What to do”.

Definition

What is Social and Communication Difficulties/Autistic Spectrum Disorder?

This is part of a group of conditions known as pervasive developmental disorders because they are all pervasive and symptomatic of disordered, not just delayed, development. SCD/ASD is diagnosed from the presence of defining behavioural features known as the 'triad of impairments' on a continuous scale of need indicated by the following:

- lack of communication or poor social communication development;
- lack of social interaction or lack of understanding of social rules;
- lack of imagination, including inability to understand how others might think or feel;
- some young people also show repetitive obsessional behaviour or rigid limited interests.

For a diagnosis of ASD/SCD these must be seen in a wide range of settings and cannot be accounted for by other medical or social conditions (such as social deprivation or lack of stimulation).

Formal diagnosis of ASD requires medical input. Ideally, diagnosis of ASD and appropriate planning should take place within six months of a concern being registered ("Autistic Spectrum Disorders Good Practice Guidance" – DfES 2002).

The term Social and Communication Difficulties (SCD) can be used by a range of professionals working in collaboration with families as a basis for planned intervention. In this way it is not necessary to wait for a formal medical diagnosis before interventions to help children and young people can be put in place. In addition, SCD may be applied to other children and young people in need rather than only those who would receive a formal ASD diagnosis.

Incidence

How many children and young people in Wiltshire may have SCD/ASD?

The term SCD/ASD covers a wide range of children and young people. This stretches from mild difficulties with social communication interaction, literal interpretation and a pedantic use of language, with strong, but restricted, areas of interest to very severe disorders with expressions of aloofness, sensory isolation, and severely limited communication and repetitive (possibly self-harming) challenging behaviour.

Using figures offered by the National Autistic Society [NAS] as guidance on the levels of incidence of SCD/ASD, current Wiltshire provision has been established, but is regularly reviewed as we gain more data about the diagnosis and needs of Wiltshire young people.

There are approximately 100,000 children and young people under the age of 18 in Wiltshire. In order to plan effectively for those amongst them who have SCD/ASD we have identified four different levels of need as follows; we also recognise that every child or young person's needs have to be assessed individually and a simple allocation to a category will not be in itself determine the services which that individual needs.

(a) Mild SCD/ASD (eg Some Asperger Syndrome)

Some of the children and young people in this group may have such mild difficulties that they will not be formally identified at all. Individuals in this group are likely to be of average intelligence or above and will experience some difficulties at times in mixing with their peers, forming and maintaining friendships and adjusting to changes in themselves and their environment. Most individuals in this category will be well catered for in mainstream environments with appropriate adjustments as necessary.

Estimates based upon the national population are that six out of 1,000 people will fall into this category giving a total for Wiltshire of 600 under the age of 18.

(b) Moderate SCD/ASD difficulties (eg some Higher Functioning Autism and some pupils with Asperger Syndrome).

Children and young people in this category may have additional moderate or specific learning difficulties and may also have social, emotional, attention and/or concentration difficulties. They are likely to have some visual, auditory or sensory processing difficulties that make it hard to them to tolerate certain environments and conditions. They may need relaxation breaks at intervals and in conditions suited to their individual requirements as they can feel more stressed or anxious than their peers. These individuals, therefore, will need special arrangements, higher in complexity and scale than those currently available in all mainstream educational settings.

This specialist provision can be based in mainstream settings with appropriate support and access to specialist services at times and may be described as Enhanced Learning Provision (ELP) at secondary level.

Nationally, two out of every 1,000 people will fall into this category giving a total for Wiltshire of 200 under the age of 18.

- (c) Severe SCD/ASD difficulties (eg severe Asperger Syndrome with complications/co-morbidity, classic autism)

Children and young people in this category may have additional moderate to severe difficulties, including overlapping diagnosis of ADHD, Tourettes Syndrome, and Oppositional Defiant Disorders.

The severity of their condition[s] affects their day to day approach to the learning and social environment. They may have significant sensory integration and processing difficulties which require different classroom and behavioural management approaches. They may have limited verbal communication skills and require an augmentative communication system such as PECs.

These children and young people may need a special environment geared to their particular needs. Many of them will attend a district specialist centre or special school with provision for children and young people with ASD but many will also be educated in mainstream Early Years settings and schools with support.

Nationally, this level of need is experienced by 1.5 out of every 1,000 people giving a total for Wiltshire of 150 under the age of 18.

- (d) Extreme SCD/ASD difficulties (eg challenging behaviour)

These children and young people may have a high chronic intolerance to environmental stimulation, such that they need highly specialised environment. They may well require constant help across all settings. They will have very significant additional learning difficulties.

Nationally, there are 0.6 or 0.7 such children and young people in every 1,000 of the population, giving a total for Wiltshire of 60 under the age of 18.

What Educational provision is there for Children and Young People with SCD/ASD?

Provision for special educational needs in Wiltshire is a partnership between individual settings and schools and the local authority. Where following educational assessment, services additional to those already available in a setting or school are needed these are provided; (please see *The Wiltshire Indicators & Provision Document (Wiltshire DCE 2008)*). This assessment could be carried out by staff from the setting or school who know the individual child or young person or it could involve assessment or consultation from support services outside the school or setting (eg educational psychology and specialist learning centres) or through the formal process of Statutory Assessment. For further information please see the following leaflets “School Action and School Action Plus, a Guide for Parents and Carers”, “What is a Statutory Assessment”, and “Parents Contribution to Statutory Assessment”.

Wiltshire is committed to enabling schools to have more direct control over resources for special educational needs. There is an ongoing process of discussion between schools and the local authority to enable increasing levels of provision to be available from schools earlier and more flexibly.

What Early Years provision is there in Wiltshire?

The local authority enables District Specialist Centres and Portage services across the county, to provide inreach and outreach services to pre-school children with complex needs. All of these providers are expected to have staff trained to provide for children with SCD/ASD.

The Early Intervention Team consisting of Area SENCOs and Schoolstart are employed by the local authority to support all 300 Early Years’ settings in the identification of children with SCD/ASD and to signpost them to appropriate agencies in order to ensure inclusion. An Early Years Toolbox and related training has been developed to support settings in the Inclusion of children with SCD/ASD

‘EarlyBird’ is a programme of training and support for parents of children with SCD/ASD at pre-school level. The programme is now available throughout Wiltshire; for further information please see the EarlyBird leaflet, available via Customer Care of contact Wiltshire County Council, Customer Care Unit on 01225 713000 for further information.

Wiltshire does not financially support specialist programmes at Early Years which are considered to limit learning, restrict collaboration between professionals on integrated programmes for SCD/ASD opportunities for children and may create difficulties when pupils reach school age.

What are our ambitions for Early Years provision?

From 2006/07, a revised strategy for all Early Years provision across the county is being implemented. This will include provision for children with special needs and will be influenced by the development of 20 Children's centres across the county.

What Primary provision is there in Wiltshire?

We aim to ensure that wherever possible, pupils with SCD/ASD needs at levels (a) and (b) and some at level (c) are taught in a mainstream school.

To this end, a Toolbox including related training to support teachers has been made available to all primary schools.

'EarlyBird Plus' is a programme of training and support for parents of children with SCD/ASD at primary school level from ages 5 – 8:11 years. Although parent initiated, schools who meet the needs of a pupil whose parents are enrolled on an EarlyBird Plus programme are invited to send a TA or other staff member to the full programme of training of training. EarlyBird Plus is available throughout the county. For further information please see the EarlyBird Plus leaflet, available through Customer Care or contact Wiltshire County Council, Customer Care Unit on 01225 713000.

Wiltshire also run 18 specialist learning centres (complex needs) in mainstream primary schools. Some primary aged children with less severe SCD/ASD needs may have their needs met in these centres.

A specialist outreach service [SoCIT] is available to provide additional consultation support for teachers of pupils with SCD/ASD in mainstream schools. Outreach staff are based in each of our four Primary ASD centres and provide consultation and practical advice to teachers and Teaching Assistants (TAs) in schools regarding individual difficulties.

They also offer termly practical workshops from the centres, and run a professional support network. Schools access support from SoCIT consultants via referral from the Local Education Team.

For SCD/ASD pupils with higher levels of need, Wiltshire has four specialist learning centres (Autism) providing 48 places in mainstream primary schools throughout the county.

What are our ambitions for Primary Mainstream Education?

The needs of primary pupils with SCD/ASD are kept under review by a co-ordinating group consisting of headteacher representatives and Local Authority staff specialising in this field. The group is responsible for identifying any changes in levels of need and proposals to change provision. In 2006, the group reviewed the location and number of specialist places throughout the county, and oversaw changes in the operation and funding of these centres. No immediate changes are planned for 2008.

What Secondary Level provision is there?

Our aim is that pupils with needs at levels (a) and (b) and some at (c) should be educated within mainstream secondary schools. A training course accredited by Bristol University Graduate School of Education to improve secondary teachers' skills in meeting the needs of these pupils has been in existence for three years and has trained 45 teachers from Wiltshire. In addition, a Toolkit with related training to assist teachers in secondary schools has been made available to all secondary schools.

An Outreach Service, operating from the Prospect Centre at Rowdeford School offers consultation and advice for teachers and TA's of young people with SCD/ASD, including opportunities for TA's and teachers to visit and learn from the good practice in the centre.

What are our ambitions for Secondary Mainstream Education?

The Local Authority is actively planning with secondary schools to provide services in each school able to meet the needs of SCD/ASD pupils with needs at levels (a) and (b) and some at (c).

From September 2008, all non-selective secondary schools will be able to offer Enhanced Learning Provision (ELP) to address the needs of those SCD/ASD pupils requiring additional support.

What Special School provision is there?

Wiltshire has six special schools in all. Larkrise (Trowbridge), Exeter House (Salisbury) and St Nicholas' (Chippenham) are designated for severe learning difficulties/profound and multiple learning difficulties. Some children and young people with SCD/ASD will have their needs met by the services of these schools.

The Prospect Centre, based at Rowdeford School, provides 30 places for secondary age pupils with SCD/ASD with moderate learning difficulties. Some of the places at the school are residential. The Prospect Centre also provides an outreach service [SSoCIT] to support pupils in secondary mainstream schools.

Downland School and Springfields School are special schools which are designated to take pupils with behavioural and social difficulties, some of whom may also have SCD/ASD.

In addition, the County Council purchases some special school places in neighbouring local authorities' schools or in independent special schools. Decisions to place children out of county are taken via a series of centrally moderated panels.

What are our ambitions for Special School Education?

It is our intention to improve the ability of our special schools to provide for pupils with SCD/ASD. Alongside this we would wish to see a reduction in the number of pupils who have to travel to other local authority schools or to independent special schools.

In partnership with the local authority, the SLD and EBD schools are exploring outreach provision so that their expertise may be made available to support pupils in other mainstream settings. We would like to promote links with mainstream settings (inreach/outreach) in order to enhance learning opportunities for pupils and professional development for staff; exchange and sharing of good practice.

What 16+ provision is there?

Many pupils with SCD/ASD will receive their 16+ provision in the school which they already attend. As services develop in these schools, therefore, they will be available to 16+ pupils as well. However, for many pupils and where a pupil is in a special school, consideration must be given at age 16 as to whether provision should be made in a college as an important step in equipping the pupil with the skills they will need to live in the wider community.

There is as yet an uneven pattern of 16+ provision across the four Wiltshire colleges in the county.

Pupils with SCD/ASD may need special support in transferring from young people's to adult services. Connexions Personal Advisors are responsible for involvement with transition planning for all pupils in this category from Year 9 onwards. Decisions on what service the young people will receive as adults are made by the Department for Community Services.

For pupils already receiving services from social care teams, the allocated social care team worker will fulfil the role of the personal advisor in relation to transition. For these young people, handover panels exist to ensure that there is clear tracking of planning and responsibility between children's and adult services.

For some of the young people involved in this process, provision will be made through highly specialised independent providers outside the county.

What are our ambitions for 16+ Services?

We wish to build closer links between schools and further education in order to build capacity to support young people post 16.

We would like to reduce the reliance on independent, out-of-county provision wherever possible.

Provision

This is part of our commitment to improving the provision for young people over 16 in-county both in schools and in colleges. The county's 14-19 Strategy places a requirement on each of the area groups to plan for the needs of all young people in this age group.

We are currently, in 2008, overhauling our transitions systems with the aim of ensuring a more consistent service to all young people with special needs.

CONTACTS

Primary ASD Centres

Charter Primary School
Wood Lane
Chippenham
SN15 3EA

Tel: 01249 447223
Fax: 01249 447223
E-mail: admin@charter.wilts.sch.uk

The Manor School
Ruskin Avenue
Melksham
SN12 7NG

Tel: 01225 700150
Fax: 01225 791836
Web: www.learningtolovelearning.co.uk
E-mail: admin@themanor.wilts.sch.uk

Woodford Valley School
Middle Woodford
Salisbury
SP4 6NR

Tel: 01722 782361
Fax: 01722 782903
Web: www.woodfordvalley.wilts.sch.uk
E-mail: admin@woodfordvalley.wilts.sch.uk

Holy Trinity School
1 Quemerford
Calne
SN11 0AR

Tel: 01249 812424
Fax: 01249 817831
E-mail: admin@holyltrinitycalne.wilts.sch.uk

Secondary ASD Centres

Prospect Centre
c/o Rowdeford School
Rowde
Devizes
SN10 2QQ

Tel: 01380 850309
Fax: 01380 859708
Web: www.rowdeford.wilts.sch.uk
E-mail: admin@rowdeford.wilts.sch.uk

St Nicholas School
Malmesbury Road
Chippenham
SN15 1QF

Tel: 01249 650435
Fax: 01249 447033
Web: www.st-nicholas.wilts.sch.uk
E-mail: admin@st-nicholas.wilts.sch.uk

Exeter House Special School
Somerset Road
Salisbury
SP1 3BL

Tel: 01722 334168
Fax: 01722 420691
Web: www.exeterhouse.ik.org
E-mail: admin@exeterhouse.wilts.sch.uk

Larkrise School
Ashton Street
Trowbridge
BA14 7EB

Tel: 01225 761434
Fax: 01225 774585
Web: www.larkrise.wilts.sch.uk
E-mail: admin@larkrise.wilts.sch.uk

Downland School
Downlands Road
Devizes
SN10 5EF

Tel: 01380 724193
Fax: 01380 728441
E-mail: admin@downland.wilts.sch.uk

Springfields School
Curzon Street
Calne
SN11 0DS

Tel: 01249 814125
Fax: 01249 811907
Web: www.springfields.wilts.sch.uk
E-mail: admin@springfields.wilts.sch.uk

If you would like an opportunity to be involved in direct consultation on educational provision for pupils with SCD/ASD, please contact PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICE: ASK Contact Number 01380 872914, E-mail info@askwiltshire.org.

Copies of all documents mentioned in this paper are available from Wiltshire County Council by phoning 01225 713000 and on the County Council website, www.wiltshire.gov.uk

or from

**Wiltshire County Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
BA14 8JB**

GLOSSARY

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
CYP	Children and young people
DCE	Department for Children and Education
EBD	Emotional and behavioural development
NAS	National Autistic Society
PEC	Picture Exchange Communication
SCD	Social and communication difficulties
SLD	Severe learning difficulties
SoCIT	Social Communication Intervention Team
SSoCIT	Secondary Social Communication Intervention Team
TA	Teaching Assistant