

I have been a registered Learning Disability Nurse for over 20 years. I have worked in NHS and independent sector services in direct care and managerial roles including the management of an autism service.

I currently work in a quality assurance role monitoring publicly commissioned, independently provided hospital and residential services.

I do not regard myself as an expert in autism spectrum conditions but have acquired a significant understanding of the higher levels of service provision for people with autism throughout the country, i.e. the models of care provided, their effectiveness, value, etc.

Some thoughts

- There needs to be a strong focus on early years services with an emphasis on multi-agency co-ordination – health, social & education – working closely with family & carers.
- Education and support for families & carers at earliest opportunity.
- All public service workers and any providers of health, social & educational services should receive mandatory training in ASC as they would for safeguarding, H&S etc. Possibly any roles who deal with members of the public.
- There needs to be a strategy for specialist training of health, social and educational staff to ensure local expertise is developed and maintained.
- Ongoing care & support should be based upon regular assessment / re-assessment of individual needs to ensure services are designed around these individual needs rather than expecting individuals to fit in to existing service provision.
- Services as well as being individualised need to be provided within local communities as close to home as possible.

Millions of pounds are spent on very expensive residential and out of area educational, residential or hospital placements, which for some individuals lasts for

decades with limited evidence of progress and positive outcomes. Redirecting these resources into locally provided specialist services tailored to individual need may well be far more cost effective in the long term but more importantly would lead to far better support and outcomes for individuals with autism and their families.

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