

I have a 25 year old daughter who is autistic – she was not properly diagnosed until she was 21 years of age and coming to terms with her diagnosis caused her a great deal of distress which affected her mental health. In light of our experiences I would suggest the following:

Professionals including health professionals such as health visitors, GPs, mental health professionals also teachers , social workers are trained in recognising signs that a child/adult may be on the autistic spectrum and have a better understanding of the condition and impact on the individual and family. There is a need for all professionals working with children, adults and families to have a better understanding – I have been appalled by the lack of knowledge and understanding.

There needs to be legal duties on NHS to make diagnosis within a certain waiting time.

Mental health professionals from my experience are shocking ignorant in relation to autism and services need to be provide that meet the needs of the client.

Local Authorities need to plan for services needed by Autistic people.

There needs to be a coordinated approach in which a child or adult is assessed in a timely manner, then offered services that meet that individual's needs.

More support is needed for carers and families.