

A01

Ymchwiliad i Fil Awtistiaeth (Cymru) / Inquiry into the Autism (Wales) Bill

Ymateb gan Unigolyn

Response from an individual

Dear Health, Social Care and Sport Committee at the National Assembly for Wales.

I'm writing to you to inform you of the anger and disappointment that I'm feeling in the light of the fact that the Welsh Government has failed to ensure continuity for the services offered by Autism Spectrum Connections Cymru (ASCC).

Please find enclosed documents which consist of the recent information regarding the changes to their services as well as information relating to ASCC which is included with this this email.

It was announced this week that ASCC will be changing and cutting down on their services from September due to lack of funding.

I'm an individual living with a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome and ADHD. I use the specialised services for people with autism that is offered by ASCC's One Stop Shop on a daily basis.

I have been using the services for at least 4 days a week for over 2 years.

I have had many 1:1 appointments, have attended group support for anxiety management, benefits support, support with friendships, relationships and specialised group sessions for people with autism who are also LGBT, employment seeking in general, as well as accessing the drop-in facility at 21 High Street.

This building acts a safe space in the community for me as a person living with autism. The flexibility provided by this unique safe-space which is open up to 6 days a week is essential for me as a person living with autism.

The services offered by ASCC are essential for me as a person living with autism. At ASCC I get the chance to feel accepted for who I am and included socially. I have previously struggled to make and maintain friendships. ASCC has helped to prevent the anxiety and depression which was previously caused from loneliness. ASCC have helped by constantly providing a sense of friendship for me during drop-in

hours. In the past, this loneliness has previously led to suicidal thoughts which have been relieved from the services offered by ASCC.

The services offered by ASCC aren't offered anywhere else. These services haven't been mentioned as part of the National ASD Strategic Action Plan. The Integrated Autism Service do not and will not provide the same level of support as the One Stop Shop at 21 High Street run by ASCC.

I was told the news yesterday that ASCC will be cutting down on their services due to lack of funds and I believe that this is unacceptable considering the amount of money that has been made available for autism specific services in Wales.

Due to the changes that will be happening from September, I have been encouraged by ASCC to consider volunteering at the charity in order to help them to continue with their work. However, despite needing the services from the perspective of a service user rather than as a volunteer, I have agreed to volunteer for them and I will continue to do so in order for the place to continue giving me support.

I thoroughly condemn the Welsh Government's action for not helping to fund the services offered by ASCC to any extent despite being completely necessary for me as an individual living with autism.

I desperately need these services. ASCC has been invaluable for me in the process of recuperating from severe mental health which led to being sectioned less than 5 years ago.

I presented a petition to the Welsh Assembly to call on the Welsh Government to help fund their work and you have not listened to any of my concerns or worries in this process.

As a person living with autism, this is in fact discrimination against me as a person with a disability whose needs will not be met as soon as they discontinue their services. These services are necessary for me and when these services are discontinued, it will have a huge impact on my everyday life.

The proposed Integrated Autism Service (IAS) has many weaknesses. To start with, they will not operate a safe space drop-in centre for individuals with autism up to 6 days a week in the centre of Cardiff. It is

outrageous to think that this sort of support isn't seen as necessary in the community for adults living with autism.

I have had very bad experiences with the Integrated Autism Service (IAS). I was recently told by [REDACTED] that having autism would not stop me from being able to do daily living tasks such as cooking and cleaning, therefore suggesting that a care plan was unnecessary for me despite having a disability under the Equality Act 2010. I am entitled to a care plan and social care assessment as well as direct payments.

This is completely incorrect and shows that he is completely incompetent for leading the Cardiff and Vale IAS. I have been making complaints.

They have failed to address my needs as a person with a disability.

The IAS has failed to provide an adequate level of support services for my needs as a person living with autism and they will never be as good as the One Stop Shop at 21 High Street in Cardiff.

I am very concerned that the IAS will not fulfil what is required for people living with autism and I have no confidence in the National ASD Strategic Action Plan.

Therefore, I come to the conclusion that I demand a full explanation of why you are not helping to fund ASCC and why you do not value their services. You have expressed that you do not value their work in the fact that you will not help to to fund the organisation. The proposed IAS will not even be close to replicating the services offered by ASCC despite claiming to do so.

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

21 High Street (Autism One Stop Shop)- services are changing

ASCC delivers a one stop shop/ flexible support service from 21 High Street in Cardiff city centre. The service was opened in January 2015 to meet a gap in service provision which existed for adults (16+) with Asperger syndrome in the South East Wales region. The service meets the needs of a largely hidden population with high levels of comorbid mental health difficulties. The service works proactively to address unmet support needs of people who might otherwise need the input of other, more cost intensive, reactive services.

Key to the development of the One Stop Shop was the idea of developing and facilitating a “safe place” for people to meet others, engage in positive social activities and to be able to access support which was developed in partnership with each person and tailored to suit their needs and intended outcomes.

Key achievements include the development of the first post diagnostic support groups for autistic adults in Wales. These workshops have been developed over the past three years in partnership with people with autism and Cardiff & Vale UHB. We have recently redeveloped these and they are now being delivered by Cardiff and Vale IAS and Gwent IAS with plans for them to be shared and be delivered across Wales.

Through our employment services we have developed close working partnerships with many of Wales’ leading employers and supported people accessing the One Stop Shop to pursue workplace opportunities which range from work experience through to full time paid work. In total 126 people have been helped into employment and 27 people have been helped to retain their existing roles as a result of our intervention.

The flexible, drop-in element of the service has meant that a community has developed where autistic people can meet with others, feel safe and comfortable and access resources including, computer equipment (PCs/iMacs/ iPads) , musical equipment (instruments and recording equipment) and recreational equipment including games consoles, pool table, a library of books and many others.

Over the past three years 21 High Street has supported over 743 autistic people to achieve the following outcomes: This is based on a full 3 years from April 2015-end of March 2018

OSS Service since 2015 (please see appendix A):

- Total number of people engaged: 716 formally registered, average of 174 different individuals accessing each month.
- Total number of Drop-in/ social group hours: 21,519
- Total number of individual visits: 39,873
- Total number of Focussed Support Hours: 17,921 (key areas listed below)
 - Housing: 1263
 - Employment: 4623
 - Crisis Intervention: 1647
 - Relationships: 589
 - Benefits (including tribunals): 3676 with a success rate of 89%, the national average is 64%.
 - Student Support/ Education: 783
 - Anxiety Management: 1459

- Sexuality/ Gender Identity: 564
- Criminal Justice System: 989
- Post Diagnostic Workshops - Total Number of Groups (6 week course): 27
- Post Diagnostic Workshops - Total Number of People supported: 142
- Employment Support Services - Total Number of Groups (10 week course): 34
- Employment Support Services - Total Number of People supported: 184
- Total number of people in Workplace Opportunities: 126

Referrals for services have come from the following Health Board areas:

- Cardiff & Vale: 420
- Aneurin Bevan: 158 (not including individuals supported for post diagnostic workshops co-delivered with Gwent IAS)
- Cwm Taff: 121
- Powys: 1
- Abertawe Bro Morgannwg: 14
- Hywel Dda: 2
- Betsi Cadwaladr: 0

We are saddened that we have been unable to secure sustainable funding to continue to deliver this unique flexible service for people in south Wales in the way that we previously have.

Funding has been unforthcoming from Welsh Government and others partly due to the development of the Integrated Autism Service. It is with regret that funding of £200,000 per year could not be sourced from the £13 million budget for the Integrated Autism Service to sustain this valuable and value for money service. We will be working with Cardiff and Vale IAS, Gwent IAS and Cwm Taff IAS as well as local authorities to ensure that people can access their services.

Autism Spectrum Connections Cymru, will still continue to provide domiciliary care, supported living services and student mentoring services throughout South Wales.

We are particularly proud of the feedback and support that we have received from people who have accessed the service and those close to them. We are aware of how deeply valued this service has been by the people it has touched and hope that the services now developed by Welsh Government across Wales will adequately fill the void that will be left.

“21 High Street has literally saved my life- before I came here I wanted to end my life” Registered user

“I love being able to drop-in and feel a part of a community” Registered User

“Being able to drop in is a lifesaver” Registered User

“Thank you. I’ve never worked before and now I have a job and feel so much more confident” Registered User

“Without you I don’t know what we would have done as a family- no one else we have spoken to has helped!” Parent

“You are our specialist point of call” CMHT staff member

“There’s no other service like yours- without you we’d be lost” IAS staff member

One Stop Shop Service since 2015



focused support

17,921

Total number of Focused Support Hours: **17,921**

Housing	1263
Employment	4623
Crisis Intervention	1647
Relationships	589
Benefits (including tribunals)	3676
A success rate of 89% - the national average is 64%	
Student Support/Education	783
Anxiety Management	1459
Sexuality/Gender Identity	564
Criminal Justice System	989

hours

people

715

715 formally registered with an average of **174** different individuals accessing each month

engaged

people into

126

Total number of people supported into workplace opportunities

workplace opportunities

employment

34

Total number of groups (10 week course)

support service

visits to

39,873

Total number of individual visits

21 high st

employment

184

Total number of people supported

support service

referrals from health board areas

Cardiff & Vale	420
Aneurin Bevan	158
Cwm Taff	121
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	14

in total

post diagnostic

142

142 people supported across a total of **27** 6-week course groups

workshops

drop in & social group

21,519

Total number of drop-in and social group hours

hours



asc
autism spectrum
connections cymru

21 High Street is a flexible support service based in a 4 storey building in Cardiff city centre for people aged 16+, who have a diagnosis of high functioning autism or Asperger syndrome. To date we have **715** people registered and over **174** different individuals accessing the service each month.

21 High Street is a service delivered by the charity Autism Spectrum Connections Cymru (ASCC).

What is 21 High Street?

ASCC is a Welsh charity which provides specialist autism services. ASCC is part of the well respected Autism Initiatives group of charities.

ASCC in numbers

39,873 individual visits

17,921 Focussed support hours including:

Housing: 1263

Employment: 4623

Crisis Intervention: 1647

Relationships: 589

Benefits: 3676 with a success rate of 89%,
(national average is 64%.)

Student Support: 783

Anxiety Management: 1459

Sexuality/Gender Identity: 564

Criminal Justice System: 989

27 Post Diagnostic Workshop Groups supporting 142 people

34 Employment Support Services Groups supporting 184 people

126 people in Workplace opportunities

“I love being able to drop in and feel a part of a **community**”

Registered User

“21 High Street has literally **saved my life** - before I came here I wanted to end my life”

Registered User

The 21 High Street Team offer focused 1:1 support, housing, employment and benefits advice. They can also meet with you to discuss problem solving in a number of areas, as well as providing a variety of social opportunities throughout each month.

You can also access independent advocacy through 21 High Street.

“With the support of ASCC I have been able to **re-engage** with the world and rediscover my **self esteem** and **confidence**. Consequently, I now have a full time job that I enjoy as well as running my own company - things I never thought would be possible just a year ago”

Registered User



We work in partnership with autistic people and other stakeholders to ensure our services are relevant, person-centred and reflect what is important to each individual and their families.

We understand that each person's autism will impact upon them in unique ways and work in partnership with them and those close to them, to develop and achieve their own goals utilising a strength based model of support, shaped around each individual.

How do I access the service?

To self-refer email: info@asc-cymru.org or call: 029 2022 8794. A member of staff will then arrange an initial meeting with you at 21 High Street.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

Tell you about the service in more detail

Give you the opportunity to ask questions

Complete a short 'about me' form which includes your contact details & information which will help us support you in the future.

This meeting should take around 30 minutes to an hour.



“You are our **specialist point of call**”

CMHT Staff Member

“Thank you. I've never worked before and now I have a job and feel so much more **confident**”

Registered User

You'll be able to:

Visit 21 High Street during drop-in hours (check our website for up to date drop-in times).

The building is a safe place where you can make use of the various facilities or just relax and meet other people.

Access a variety of activity based social groups.

Arrange 1:1 appointments with staff for specialist advice/support.

Receive a monthly newsletter keeping you up to date with our available services and one-off events.



Contact us

Autism Spectrum Connections Cymru

Registered Office

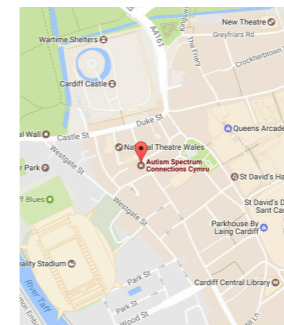
The One Stop Shop
21 High Street
Cardiff, CF10 1PT
info@asc-cymru.org
02920 228 794

www.asc-cymru.org

Twitter: @ASCCymru

Facebook: /ASCCymru

Charity No: 1158045 Company No: 08461023



“For the first time in my life I have a sense of **hope** & feel positive for the **future**. 21 High Street's support has been **invaluable**”

Registered User

asc
autism spectrum
connections cymru

“There's no other service like **yours** - without you we'd be lost”

IAS Staff Member



“Without you I don't know what we would have done as a **family** - no one else we have spoken to has helped!”

Parent

21 High Street



Offering tailored support for adults with autism in a safe, friendly and non judgemental space in the heart of Cardiff



Support for adults with autism

August Activities at 21 High Street

				WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY					
				1 AUG		2 AUG		3 AUG					
				Drop In 2pm - 7:30pm		Benefits Drop in 12pm - 3pm		Supported Drp-In 11:30-1:30 Drop In 2pm-5:30pm					
				Social Drop In 6pm - 7:30pm		Creative Writing 3pm-4:45pm		D&D 4pm-5:45pm					
SATURDAY 4 AUG		SUNDAY 5 AUG		MONDAY 6 AUG		WEDNESDAY 8 AUG		THURSDAY 9 AUG		FRIDAY 10 AUG			
				Job Club 1pm-4pm Drop In - 1:30pm-6:30pm Anime Society 5:30-6:45pm		Drop In - 1pm-5:30pm Creative Drop-in 1pm-4pm Pool Group 16:00 -17:30		Benefits Drop in 12pm - 3pm Creative Writing 3pm-4:45pm		Supported Drp-In 11:30-1:30 Drop In 2pm-5:30pm			
SATURDAY 11 AUG		SUNDAY 12 AUG		MONDAY 13 AUG		TUESDAY 14 AUG		WEDNESDAY 15 AUG		THURSDAY 16 AUG		FRIDAY 17 AUG	
				Job Club 1pm-4pm Drop In - 1:30pm-6:30pm CALM Drop In 2pm-4:30pm Gaming @21 High Street 5pm -7p		History Group 11am-1pm Drop In - 1pm-5:30pm Creative Drop-in 1pm-4pm		Drop In 2pm - 5:30pm		Creative Writing 3pm-4:45pm		Supported Drp-In 11:30-1:30 Drop In 2pm-5:30pm	
SATURDAY 18 AUG		SUNDAY 19 AUG		MONDAY 20 AUG		TUESDAY 21 AUG		WEDNESDAY 22 AUG		THURSDAY 23 AUG		FRIDAY 24 AUG	
				Drop In - 1:30pm-6:30pm		Drop In - 1pm-5:30pm		Drop In 2pm - 5:30pm		No Drop In Sessions		Drop In 2pm-5:30pm	
SATURDAY 25 JULY		SUNDAY 26 JULY		MONDAY 27 JULY		TUESDAY 28 JULY		WEDNESDAY 29 JULY		THURSDAY 30 JULY		FRIDAY 31 JULY	
				Bank Holiday 21 High Street Closed		No Drop In Sessions		No Drop In Sessions		No Drop In Sessions		No Drop In Sessions	