

7 August 2015

Dear Colleague

Scottish Strategy for Autism - Innovation and Development Funding

We are pleased to advise that Scottish Ministers are continuing their commitment to develop and enhance services for people with autism and we are now seeking applications for **innovation and development funding** which will be available for 2015-16.

The Scottish Strategy for Autism provides a framework to build on improvements to autism services in Scotland, including support to families to access services such as social care, education, housing and employment. Since 2011 the Scottish Government has committed to an Autism Development Fund and has funded a number of statutory organisations and local and national third sector organisations for a variety of local and national projects that support and improve the outcomes for people with autism.

Working with a wide range of stakeholders funding in 2015/16 will focus on our identified priorities. This includes the development of services that focus on outcomes based approaches; locality based integrated partnership working and national projects delivered in partnership.

The criteria that will be considered is attached at **Annex A**. We are also enclosing an application form at **Annex B**. This letter invites proposals for innovative projects which will help to develop and improve services to people with autism and their families in line with the Strategy's outcome focused delivery approach at **Annex C**.

Development Funding Timetable

Applications invited from	7 August 2015
Closing date for applications	18 September 2015
Organisations notified	30 September 2015

Your application should be sent to Annette Pyle, Annette.pyle@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

by no later than 18 September 2015. Late applications will not be considered however if you wish to discuss your proposal prior to submitting an application please feel free to contact me.

Please also free to pass this invite to other relevant organisations who may be interested in applying.

Yours sincerely

Annette Pyle
Care and Support Team

As is the case with all public funding, we will need to be able to demonstrate to Scottish Ministers that the services funded are providing value for money.

The grants will only be available up to 31 March 2016 in the first instance. Funding beyond this will be subject to Scottish Government Spending Review and demonstration that the grant conditions have been met.

Bids developed with Health and Social Care Partnerships and other third sector organisations in order to improve integrated services for people with autism are preferred.

As in previous years a limited amount of funding is available. While we do not propose to set a maximum amount, in the interest of providing equitable access to the number of organisations expected to apply, it may be necessary to restrict the amount of any award.

We also encourage innovation and improvement through small projects requiring funding of less than £10k. We are looking to fund projects activities both large and small that improve the lives of people affected by autism. And address the whole lifespan.

The Scottish Government will work in partnership with a third party who will on our behalf monitor and evaluate projects through the funding period. Therefore we will require successful organisations to provide progress reports showing how you are achieving the aims and objectives outlined in their applications during the funding period and a final report at the end of the funding period. Successful organisations will be required to co-operate in sharing and learning workshops throughout the funding period.

Please note we are unable to fund research.

We aim to fund projects that help support the delivery of:

Outcome 1

A Healthy Life: People with autism enjoy the highest attainable standard of living, health and family life and have timely access to diagnostic assessment and integrated support services.

Goal - Improve access to integrated service provision across the multi-dimensional aspects of autism.

- Improve access to integrated service provision, particularly diagnosis and post-diagnostic support
- Build capacity in autism service provision or provide support, particularly where this does not exist currently or is very limited;
- Develop a range of services in conjunction with local Health and Social Care Partnerships; by adopting a local/regional partnership approach
- Supports the implementation of local autism plans

Outcome 2

Choice and Control: *People with autism are treated with dignity and respect and services are able to identify their needs and are responsive to meet those needs.*

Goal - Consistent adoption of good practice guidance in key areas of education, health and social care across local authority areas.

- *support innovation and improvement in autism services*
- *develop person centred approaches to services*

Outcome 3

Independence: *People with autism are able to live independently in the community with equal access to all aspects of society. Services have the capacity and awareness to ensure that people are met with recognition and understanding.*

Goal - Capacity and awareness building in mainstream services to ensure people are met with recognition and understanding of autism

- provide solutions to out of area placements
- supports people with autism to live independently
- *innovative projects increasing skills and competency through local experiential learning opportunities*

Outcome 4

Active Citizenship: *People with autism are able to participate in all aspects of community and society by successfully making the transition from school or college into adult life.*

Goal - Improve access to appropriate transition planning across the lifespan

- Improve access to appropriate transition planning across the lifespan, including access to employment, education and training opportunities
- Improve social and community connectiveness for people with autism
- Improve information and support for parents of people with autism, including access to peer support initiatives
- Support transition practice in line with the 'Principles of Good Transitions 2'

Assessment Criteria

- It is crucial that successful bids demonstrate the the project meets the Scottish Government's autism strategy strategic outcomes and goals.
- Preference for joint bids with other organisations to maximise spend and effectiveness especially those with a matched funding element
- Preference for bids that demonstrate meaningful collaboration and coproduction with service users and carers
- Clear outline of how you will evaluate your projects performance against the Strategy's outcomes
- A clear plan including timescales for the project should be clearly identified in the bid.
- Detail how your organisation will share knowledge and learning with the Scottish Government and other organisations
- Proposals from national providers should outline how they will work at a local level
- Any new service must be accompanied by a sustainability plan as funding is to seed innovation and is not on-going.
- Particularly welcome innovative projects providing support in rural and remote areas

For more information on the Strategy's goals and recommendations please refer to the Scottish Autism Strategy website: www.autismstrategyscotland.org.uk.

Annex B Final Application attached in the email

Priorities 2015-17 Strategic Outcome 1

A Healthy Life: People with autism enjoy the highest attainable standard of living, health and family life and have timely access to diagnostic assessment and integrated support services.

What we will do

Improve access to integrated service provision across the multi-dimensional aspects of autism.

Why we need to do this

For people with autism getting an assessment of autism is the first step to accessing services they need to meet their personal outcomes.

What we have achieved:

- In partnership with the Autism Achieve Alliance we have produced action research which has provided evidence to address waiting times for diagnosis.
- Funded a wide variety of autism development and innovation, projects across health and support services.
- Developed and rolled out a Menu of Interventions, to professionals across Scotland, that supports people with Autism.
- Put in place a National Coordination team to work strategically with LAs to develop autism action plans and implement them based on local needs.

What we will do next:

- We will take steps to improve how people with autism are captured in health and social care data to better understand and evidence their needs.
- Share best practice in the use of the menu of interventions.
- Provide leadership for an improvement programme across NHS Boards to improve diagnostic services and increase diagnostic capacity.
- Continue to support implementation of local action plans ensuring that local authorities and third sector organisations can identify local autism needs and commission the appropriate services to meet those needs.
- Encourage innovation and improvement in autism services through Autism Funded

projects and explore how learning from these projects can be evaluated and shared wider.

Priorities 2015-17 Strategic Outcome 2

Choice and Control: People with autism are treated with dignity and respect and services are able to identify their needs and are responsive to meet those needs.

What we will do

Consistent adoption of good practice guidance in key areas of education, health and social care across local authority areas.

Why we need to do this

People with autism tell us that they experience variation in access and how services respond to their needs. Professionals must be able to understand autism and develop services that are responsive to the needs of people with autism.

What we have achieved:

- Published a strategy edition of Good Autism Practice that highlights autism practice in Scotland.
- Worked in partnership with Scottish Autism to develop a web based Autism Toolbox to improve accessibility of this educational resource for teachers and support staff.
- Shared good autism practice through the delivery of good practice events on the Menu of Intervention, Transitions and local autism action plans.
- Supported the development of professional networks and good practice events with autism professionals and autism leads across health, social care and third sector.
- In partnership held research into action workshops to highlight autism research which could impact autism practice.

What we will do next:

- Explore how research on autism can be shared and translated into practice. Further develop opportunities to take forward gaps in autism research.
- Continue to work across all sectors to improve autism practice through networks, good autism practice events and annual national events. Explore how these networks can work collaboratively to improve services.

- Work in partnership to continue to promote the use of the Autism Toolbox in schools and teacher training colleges.
- Encourage innovation and improvement in autism services through Autism Funded projects and explore how learning from these projects can be evaluated and shared wider.
- Promote the use of a person centred approach to identify and improve personal outcomes for people with autism.

Priorities 2015-17 Strategic Outcome 3

Independence: People with autism are able to live independently in the community with equal access to all aspects of society. Services have the capacity and awareness to ensure that people are met with recognition and understanding.

What we will do

Capacity and awareness building in mainstream services to ensure people are met with recognition and understanding of autism

Why we need to do this

People with autism experience barriers accessing community facilities. Having the right support and a knowledgeable workforce to deliver services are important aspects of an independent life.

What we have achieved:

- Piloted a One Stop Shops approach for people with autism.
- Funded Open University and University of Strathclyde to provide free autism modules to build professional capacity in autism in a range of sectors and settings.
- Developed the NES Training Framework to identify training provision and gaps for further development.
- Through our partners we have developed a national network to provide information about autism and facilitate professional autism networks to share knowledge and good practice.

What we will do next:

- Support One Stop Shops to become sustainable by embedding the service in local

strategic delivery plans.

- Work in partnership with policy colleagues across wider government to identify joint objectives and develop shared outcomes.
- Develop the skills and competency of the health and social care workforce through implementing the NHS NES autism training framework and further develop training opportunities where gaps in provision have been identified.
- Support access to the community for people with autism by increasing an understanding of autism in mainstream services and breaking down barriers to access.
- Explore alternative solutions to out of area placements for people with complex care needs drawing from the data obtained in the Mental Health Day Bed Audit.
- Promote personal outcomes approaches for people with autism by working to influence the choice self-directed of support providers and support available for people with autism.
- Understand the level of autism alert card schemes across Scotland and consider the benefits and any risks.
- Explore the impact of Open University and University of Strathclyde free autism modules schemes to determine how training is building professional capacity, in order to identify future need and prioritise further funding.
- Encourage innovation and improvement through Autism Funded projects to enable people with autism to live independently and explore how these can be shared wider.

Priorities 2015-17 Strategic Outcome 4

Active Citizenship: People with autism are able to participate in all aspects of community and society by successfully transitioning from school into meaningful educational or employment opportunities.

What we will do

Improve access to appropriate transition planning across the lifespan

Why we need to do this

People with autism can experience barriers to participation in aspects of community life including education, employment opportunities and social activities. A good transition plan

from school will enable young people with autism to plan their future participation in and contribution to their community.

What we have achieved:

- Supported people with autism to contribute to Scotland's economy through a range of supported employment models i.e. Project SEARCH, Diversity works 4 Me and Iwork4me.
- Published a guide to employment policy structures and initiatives in Scotland for people with autism to understand supported employment routes.
- Funded the development of the updated Principles of Good Transitions for professionals working in pre to post school transitions and beyond.

What we will do next:

- Work in partnership with Association for Real Change and statutory bodies to embed the Principles of Good Practice Transitions into practice.
- Promote personal outcomes approaches for people with autism by working to influence the opportunities for people with autism in opportunities for all, young workforce strategy and employment.
- Encourage innovation and improvement through Autism Funded projects that enable people with autism to be better socially connected and explore how these projects can be shared wider.
- Work with partners to improve Modern Apprenticeship opportunities for young people with autism.
- Promote further positively evaluated models of supported employment.