

Autism Accreditation Assessment

Glenelg Support A

Reference No.	27576
Assessment dates	12-16 th September 2022
Lead Assessor	Jonny Knowles
External Moderator	Rachel Gittens
Status prior to the assessment	Accredited
Advanced status applied for	No

About this Assessment

This report states key findings on how well autistic individuals are supported according to our framework of good autism practice. Evidence has been primarily obtained from observation, supplemented by evidence from interviews, a sample of support plans and information provided by the provision. If opportunities to observe has been problematic or limited greater weighting has been given to other sources of evidence.

Where appropriate, feedback has been obtained from autistic people supported by the service and/or family members and this feedback has been considered in findings.

Findings from the Assessment

Differences in Social Communication

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Person Centred Plans (PCPs) include specific information on each person's preferred method of communication and on how best to support them in this. Communication Passports also describe strengths and sensitivities and take in to account what motivates autistic people to socially interact with others.

PCPs and Communication passports identify challenges or barriers each autistic person may experience in social communication and interaction. Communication Passports and PCPs also identify approaches or tools which should be employed to enable autistic people to understand others and to express themselves. Visual Schedules are developed on an individual basis and examples were observed using photographs, symbols, and/or written words to depict planned activities. Both staff and autistic people were observed using the strategies identified in plans to communicate choices, routines and preferred activities.

Review Meeting documentation, Case Studies, Active Support Plans and daily logs include clear references to the individual strengths and progress made for each individual in terms of their communication and interaction. Active Supports, where relevant, include identified goals in relation to developing functional communication and case study evidence the structure used, the use of person-centred approaches and the use of visual aids.

In interviews, staff gave examples of how autistic people have been supported in their communication and social engagement and the positive outcomes achieved. Staff at Measham Way particularly highlighted the progress made by the individuals in being able to communicate their needs and choices using the visual systems which have been introduced across the home. Staff in the Meadows also discussed the development of social communication as a result in participating in different community activities individually and in small groups.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

In almost all observations, staff made themselves understood by simplifying or structuring verbal language and providing visual cues. Particularly good practice was observed in the Meadows, where staff have introduced a range of visual systems which they used to support communication, including communication boards, visuals and visual keyrings. To further develop practice, in a small number of observations, staff would benefit from reducing the amount of verbal language and replacing this with clear visual prompts, as seen in Measham Way and the Meadows.

In almost all observations, autistic people could made themselves understood by having access to augmentative or alternative communication systems and individual communication tools. Where particularly good practice was observed, autistic people independently used the tools to spontaneously communicate with staff or used these to communicate with members of the community.

In all observations, autistic people were provided with opportunity and purpose to communicate as part of a group or 1:1 with staff, with each other and where appropriate with members of the community. Staff within the services discussed how they aim to provide opportunities within the community to enable autistic people to practise and develop their communication outside of the home environment. To further develop practice, the service could further explore how they can promote more engagement between services so that autistic people have and increased number of opportunities to meet other autistic people with similar likes and interest.

Problem Solving and Self-reliance

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

PCPs and Review meeting documentation include clear references to the individual strengths and progress made by each autistic person in terms of their independence. Active support plans break down goals in to achievable steps, which are regularly reflected on by staff supported by the PBS team.

Tools and approaches, used to support autistic people in activities, during transitions, coping with changes and making choices are documented in PCPs and Individual Activity Plans. The sampled plans included references to consistent approaches, including now and next, checklists and visual schedules.

PCPs and Active support plans identify tools and approaches which provide suitable levels of support whilst fostering opportunities to further develop skills and to work towards identified goals. Each individual has a current active support plan including clearly identified outcomes. Staff discussed how they have introduced achievable

active support targets to ensure that they are providing opportunities for independence by adapting equipment, clothing or routines.

In interviews, staff gave examples of how they have supported autistic people in following routines; coping with change; making decisions – and the positive outcomes achieved as a result. During the assessment staff discussed how they use now and next, visual schedules, calendars and sequence strips to support autistic people to understand and follow routines independently. Staff at the Meadows discussed how they support one autistic individual, who is also visually impaired, by using aroma therapy oils which represent different times of the day. Staff highlighted the positive outcomes as a result of this approach, with the supported individual needing fewer physical prompts at key transition points of the day.

During the assessment staff shared a number of case studies which provided an overview of how staff have supported autistic people in different ways, such as to support in transitions, accessing activities of interest and to develop social communication skills. In each case study staff referred to the structure used, the use of person-centred approaches and the use of visual aids and tools, where applicable.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

In almost all observations, autistic people could work out what they must do now and what they are expected to do next by using a variety of resources including visual schedules, to-do checklists and other personal approaches. Where particular good practice was observed, individuals managed their own visual schedules or systems without the need for staff prompting.

In all observations, autistic people were supported to do things by themselves rather than needing to be directed by a member of staff. Staff were observed using a range of graded assistance and active supports to promote independence. Where particular good practice was observed, in a large number of observations, staff replaced verbal prompts with visual supports in order to support individuals to do things for themselves, only stepping in to provide additional support after adequate processing time had been given.

Within almost all observations, autistic people were supported to develop skills and confidence in actively expressing their opinion, making and taking decisions. During observations staff used a range of strategies, such as choice boards and communication boards, which enabled autistic people to make choices about their support and activities. Where particular good practice was observed, staff made excellent use of opportunities to enable the supported individual to make choices, particularly when shopping and in the community.

Within all observations, autistic people were provided with opportunities to consolidate and develop daily functional skills for example communication, safety, self-care, participation in leisure and recreation and work skills. During the assessment staff shared a number of active supports with clear outcomes which evidence the development of key independence and functional skills. Where particularly good practice was observed, the staff providing support took a step back enabling the individual to lead the transaction whilst paying within the community, stepping in when needed and then stepping back when not. Staff also discussed how a number of individuals are supported to access voluntary rolls by staff, and the development of a range of skills as a result of the placements.

Sensory Experiences

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

"My Sensory Preferences", within each individual's PCP, includes details of identified sensory needs and preferences. Individuals other working documentation also cites specific sensory information, for example in communication passports, activity plans, PBS plans and active supports.

Plans particularly focus on sensory experiences autistic individuals enjoy and what they might find challenging. In the sampled documents, sensory preferences inform activity plans and active support plans, for example when considering home environments and/or when planning further opportunities in the wider community.

Plans include sensory preferences which share approaches and/or tools that should be employed to help autistic people regulate sensory experiences or avoid sensory overload. For some autistic people, plans include agreed strategies or regular activities which help them to regulate within their home or within the community, for example drives, walks, trampolining, hot tubs and time spent within individually developed sensory gardens.

Examples of sensory strategies were seen to be used to good effect during the period of assessment including the use of sensory equipment within the homes and community.

In interviews, staff gave examples of how they have supported autistic people in their sensory regulation or avoiding sensory overload and positive outcomes achieved as a result. Staff particularly discussed the introduction of more in-home sensory preferences as a result of the need during lockdown.

A number of autistic people also discussed how they have developed their rooms around their likes, interests and sensory preferences.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Within all observations, autistic people have access to sensory activities or environments which they appeared to find enjoyable or relaxing. In a small number of services, staff have adapted spare rooms into sensory areas containing individuals likes and preferences. In other homes, individuals have played a central role in the development of their rooms in order to match their preferences in colours and furnishings.

In all observations, autistic people were supported to tolerate a range of sensory experiences within a safe and secure context. Homes across the services were both low arousal and homely and both staff and autistic people described how they have collaboratively developed the home environment. Person-centred documentation and staff interviews evidenced the considerations and adaptations made by staff in order to support autistic people to feel relaxed.

In all observations, autistic people were supported to regulate sensory experiences which could interfere with what they are trying to do or cause them discomfort. Individuals had access to preferred items, ear defenders, adapted lighting and a range of other adaptations which had been made to their home environment.

Careful consideration is given by staff when completing an activity and any key sensory tools/approaches are clearly identified on the activity plan to ensure a consistent approach between staff.

Emotional Well-being

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Plans show an appreciation of activities which each autistic individual finds enjoyable, for example PCPs describe what makes autistic individuals happy and things they can do by themselves.

As required, staff write positive behaviour plans for individuals at the service. These are written in clear language and provide an overview of the aims of the plan, identified behaviours to be addressed, the function/reason for the behaviour and strategies of support.

Three monthly review documentation includes clear references to the individual strengths and progress made for each autistic person in terms of their social, emotional and mental health. Staff also reflect on this daily within the daily logs.

A number of documents cite information on the goals and aspirations of the supported individuals, including long term personal aspirations. For some individuals, where appropriate, voluntary placements are identified which provide 'real world' opportunities for individuals to work towards achieving goals and aspirations, examples include work in charity shops and gaining experience in a number of community-based schemes.

Plans identify positive achievements and progress impacting on the quality of life of each autistic person including greater access to and inclusion within community activities. Individual activity plans evidenced the breadth of access to and inclusion within community activities. Risk Assessments take in to account identified risks for each autistic person, and where applicable, these link with Support Plans and strategies.

In interviews, staff gave examples of how autistic people have been supported that resulted in positive outcomes in terms of quality of life and life opportunities including greater inclusion and involvement within the community. Case studies also evidenced positive outcomes achieved by some of the supported individuals at the service, particularly when accessing community activities which have had a positive outcome on autistic people's quality of life.

In interviews, staff described how autistic people are actively engaged in determining how they are supported; what activities they take part in and what goals they are working towards, according to what is appropriate for their capacity. Staff described how individuals are supported to feed into their Three-Monthly Reviews and discussed how they are supported to participate in the interview process in order to shape the service. On an individual basis, staff described how individuals use choice boards and visuals to indicate preferred activities to staff.

Feedback from autistic people, which was obtained from 16 completed surveys and informal interviews, evidences that they all believe that the support they receive is, and staff have a good understanding of their skills and needs. Individuals were proud to share the progress they had made in employability skills, community access and independence when meeting the individuals at their homes and within the office. Autistic people particularly highlighted the “happy” and “trustworthy staff” who “know me and my needs”.

In interviews, staff described how family, carers or advocates are supported to be actively involved where appropriate to do so. Feedback from family members, which was obtained from 16 completed surveys, shows that all family members feel the support that their family member receives is good or always good and staff’s understanding of their relative’s skills and interests is also good or always good. 7 family members left a comment on the completed questionnaires which are found in the appendix to this report.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Within all observations, autistic people presented as feeling safe and calm. Documentation evidences proactive and preventative strategies which are in place to support autistic people to avoid anxiety, confusion or distress from occurring or escalating. During a small number of observations, where it was needed, staff were observed implementing proactive supports at the first signs of anxiety.

Personal files evidence each individual’s likes, interests and levels of emotional regulation/understanding. During observations, staff and the individuals discussed their likes and emotions relating to current activities or task. One autistic person discussed how the PBS team have supported him to reflect on his emotions and are available, alongside his staff team, to offer any additional emotional support.

Throughout all observations, autistic people were treated with dignity, status and respect and are provided with meaningful positive feedback which appeared to boost confidence and self-esteem. Staff across the service have developed positive and trusting relationships with the individuals whom they support. These relationships allow the supported individuals to feel safe and confident when encountering new situations/ experiences or learning a new activity or skill

Some long-standing staff members have clearly developed genuine and authentic relationships with the individuals whom they support, inviting them to personal celebration events outside of the social care environment.

Within all observations, autistic people were engaged in meaningful activities which they appeared to find fun or interesting. Each individual’s activity schedule is informed by their likes and interests and is regularly reviewed by staff. To further develop practices, in the homes with multiple tenancies, staff may benefit from offering more specific and structured activities within the home based around the likes and interest of the individuals.

Within all observations, autistic people were supported to achieve a sense of completion and achievement. During visits to the homes staff and autistic people shared positive outcomes which they had achieved with pride, including going on holiday, gaining independence, attending new activities and other achievements.

Section 3: Summary of assessment

What the provision does particularly well

What stood out as particular strengths: in supporting autistic people:

Throughout all observations, autistic people were treated with dignity, status and respect and are provided with meaningful positive feedback which appeared to boost confidence and self-esteem.

The service's PBS team play a pivotal role in developing autism practice across the homes through coaching, training, advice and support. Staff across the service discussed the team's "valuable support".

Autistic people are engaged in meaningful activities which they appear to enjoy. Activity schedules are adapted to meet the personal needs and preferences of each individual and are regularly reviewed to ensure that they provide opportunities to work towards identified goals.

Staff across the service have developed positive and trusting relationships with the individuals whom they support. These relationships allow the supported individuals to feel safe when encountering new situations or experiences.

What else the provision does well:

Staff are flexible in their approach, adapting their communication to meet the needs and preferences of each individual. Where particularly good practice was observed, autistic people independently used their tools to spontaneously communicate with staff or members of the community.

The service's new Recruitment and Retention Coordinator has raised aspirations for recruitment at the service, ensuring that the service's values are at the centre of the recruitment process.

The QSA (Quality Service Audit) and QSDR (Quality Support Development Review) ensures that managers are regularly reviewing support documents and developing actions with a focus on developing the consistency across the whole service.

Staff across the service feel well supported by the service's "approachable, open and understanding" management team/structure.

For each case study shared, staff demonstrated a sound appreciation of each autistic person, outcomes, personalised approaches and next steps.

The service's robust training programme is delivered by internal and experienced staff members. Training is regularly reviewed to ensure it reflects the current needs of the services/individuals and includes regular workshops to support staff with practical coaching and support.

Where particularly good practice was observed, the staff providing support took a step back enabling the individual to lead transactions, stepping in when needed and then stepping back.

The majority of family members think that the support their family member receives is mostly or always good.

What the provision could develop further

Priorities for the provision in ensuring consistency and quality in supporting autistic people:

Continue to work with staff to refine the information being recorded in the daily logs. Although progress has clearly been made in this area, managers should continue to support staff in their understanding and collection of purposeful information through the planned workshops and ongoing coaching sessions.

Other areas to consider:

Continue to support staff in their continuous development and implementation of Active Support Plans ensuring outcomes are SMART.

The service should explore how they can promote more regular engagement between services so that autistic people have more opportunities to meet other autistic people with similar likes and interests. For example, having a closed Facebook group, WhatsApp group or Yammer. This could replicate the information shared on the quarterly newsletters but on a more regular basis.

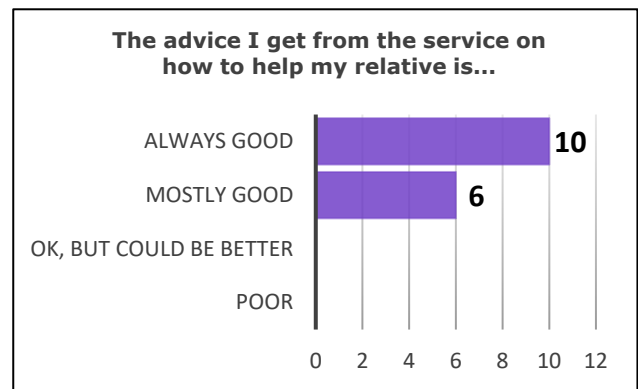
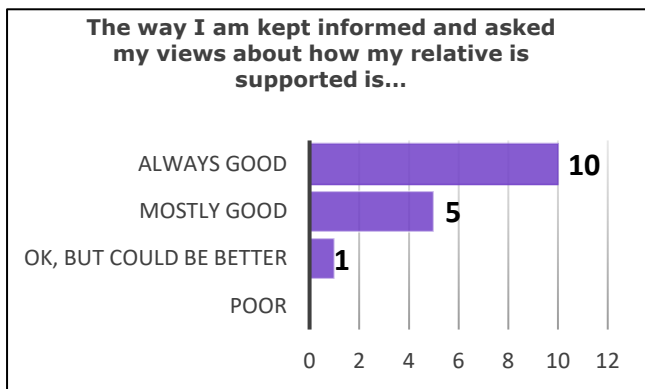
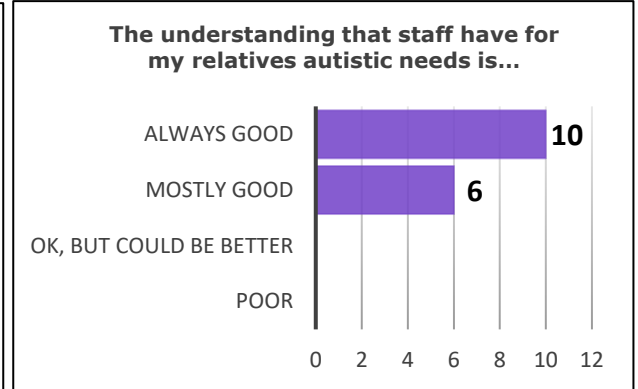
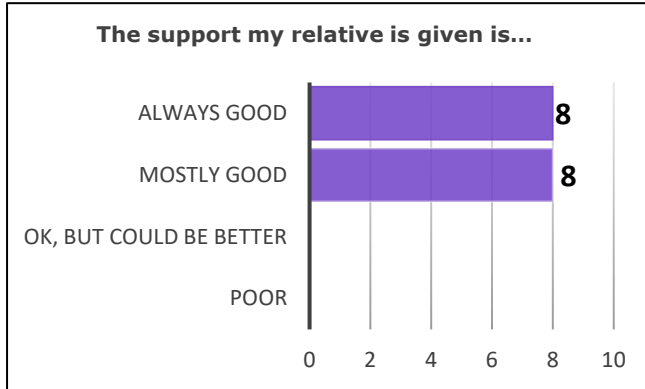
The service could explore the introduction of a centralised system to move away from paper-based files, giving managers and PBS staff access to pertinent information without the need to have to travel between services.

To further develop practice, in a small number of observations, staff would benefit from reducing the amount of verbal language and replacing this with clear visual prompts, as seen in Measham Way and the Meadows.

To further develop practice, in the homes with multiple tenancies, staff may benefit from offering more specific and structured activities within the home, based around the likes and interests of the individuals.

APPENDIX: SURVEYS

Families of Autistic Persons - Questionnaire Responses (16)



Comments

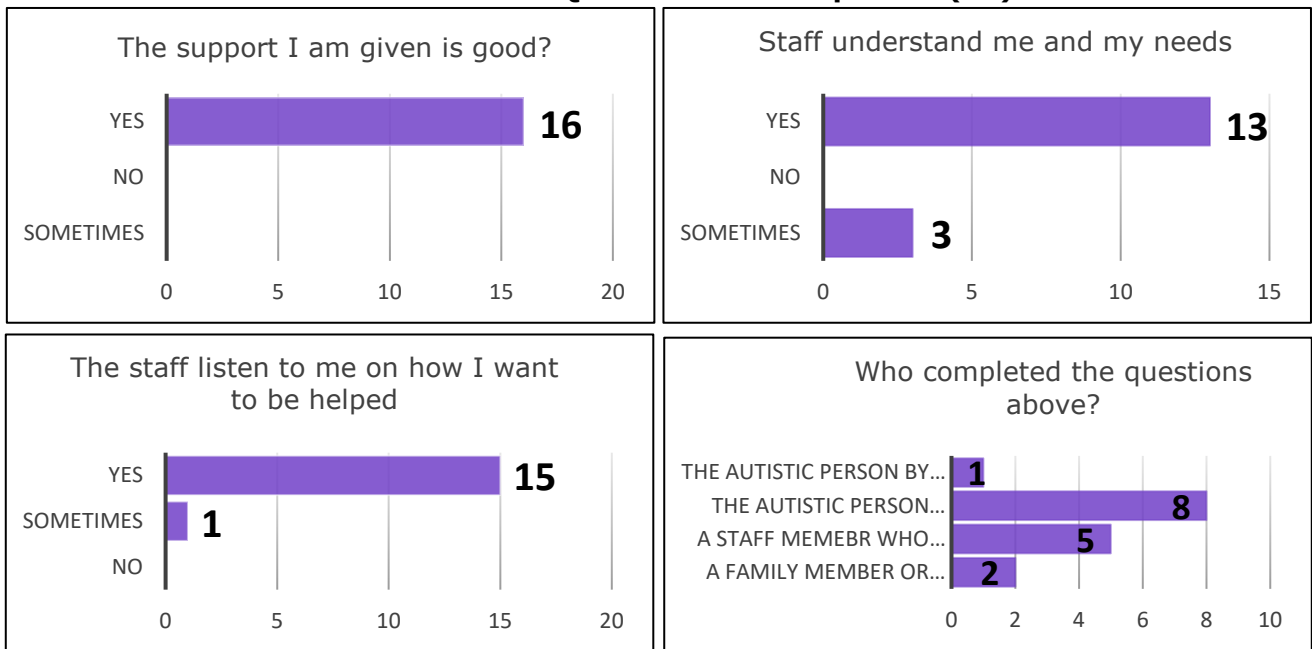
ID Responses

1	Depending on the members of staff who are supporting my daughter the care she receives ranges from good to excellent. As with all social care provision, maintaining good quality staff who are consistent in their approach and who see this type of work as a vocation, remains an ongoing challenge. Communication with the staff and management team at Glenelg is outstanding and I feel reassured that I can raise any questions and that they are responded to swiftly and sensitively. I believe staff went 'above and beyond' during the global pandemic and lockdowns and have worked so hard to ensure the experience was as positive as it could be for the people who live at XXXX.
2	At present we are pleased with the way in which our son is being supported.
3	We find all staff we deal with from carers to senior Management very supportive and nothing is too much trouble. We feel very confident that our Son is cared for in the best possible way and he demonstrates this by his actions and demeanour

ID Responses

4	We have a good process of sharing information, needs and issues concerning our son's well being with the management of the care staff at our son's home. This ensures all matters concerning our son's well being are discussed on a regular basis.
5	My relative is in safe hand and giving me peace of mind. I know that they are in a comfortable environment with everything they need to be able to live a full and varied life supported by staff who will support them in new experiences.
6	I am extremely happy the way my relative is looked after
7	Once a 'team' is in place everything is always good. The fact that new team members have to shadow present team is fantastic.

Autistic Person - Questionnaire Responses (16)



Comments

1. *I like my staff a lot*



APPENDIX: INFORMATION FROM THE PROVISION

Type of provision – **Supported Living**

How many people are supported by the provision? **27**

How many of this number are autistic? **23**

What is the range of autistic people supported by the provision? e.g., age; learning disability; verbal or non-verbal etc.

Supported Living for people 18+ with learning Disability, autism, physical and mental health disabilities
We support 27 individuals, 23 with a diagnosis of autism. We support verbal and non-verbal individuals.

Outcome of last statutory inspection if applicable.

Body	Date	Outcome
CQC	29/10/19	Good

Please include a hyperlink to the report:

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-1938665039>

What are the main specialist approaches used in supporting autistic people in their social communication and sensory regulation and promotes their independence and well-being?

We use a person-centred approach to promote people's dignity and to enable people achieve positive outcomes. We have a PBS department that supports individuals, staff, and services in developing pro-active strategies, including augmentative communication systems (i.e. visual support, object reference, Makaton). We also support with sensory regulation by offering in house and community activities, assessments and strategies, and environmental risk assessments are undertaken in each home.

We also promote the individuals' independence using person-centred active support plans that enable them to problem solve the next steps. The active support is tailored to the task and the needs of the individuals (i.e. the use of forward, backward chaining, and mirroring).

As part of the autism training, staff are trained in social communication and sensory needs. Staff have also accessible to them PBS plans with strategies to support the individual in achieving the best outcome as possible. All supported

individuals have a communication passport with information on their likes, dislikes, and needs.

Also, all staff have an autism workbook that they need to complete within 3 months of their training that includes social communication and interaction section, plus sensory assessments. The findings of the workbooks are discussed in probation/ supervisions and forwarded on to the PBS department, who review and monitor them.

What training or support do staff receive in delivering these approaches?

We offer in house training in autism, PBS, Safety Intervention. The PBS department also offer ad hoc training to the teams based on the needs of the service and the individuals, and offers workshops on different autism topics, and person-centred planning meetings.

Frequent workshops are also held and have covered in the past active support, and daily logs. The PBS will be planning a workshop on communication systems.

What processes are in place to ensure that each autistic person has a regularly reviewed personal support plan that identifies strategies and sets targets in their social communication and sensory regulation and promotes their independent and well-being?

Person-centred support plans are to be reviewed formally every 3 months. Each PCP has its own section on communication and sensory needs, as well a section on the positive outcomes the individual would like to achieve. The individuals personal risk assessments are reviewed every 6 months.

Non-task and task orientated active supports are in place to further develop the individuals' social communication and develop their skills and independence. There is a section in the plan that captures the wellbeing needs as well as a health action plan that is reviewed every 3 months.

The PBS department works alongside the teams, including the services managers, and outside agencies to support in the review if required.

Service Managers complete a Quality Service Audit (QSA) that runs over a 12 month period and every 3 months they complete sections on person-centred documents and plans, and their observations on staff's practice and support provided to the individuals by using practice leadership skills. All staff have 6 weekly supervisions where they reflect on their practice and set positive outcomes for the supported individuals and the service.

How are autistic people consulted in the support they receive?

People have bi-monthly meetings and individual 1-1 support. We use varied communication systems, such as easy read documents, to enable them to be involved in the support they receive, making it a person-centred approach.

Our daily records enable us to monitor and review the individuals needs and they inform the person-centred plan. Our individuals are also listened to by their actions and reactions, and staff take notes on their likes and dislikes.

We also work collaboratively with family, advocates, and local authorities to give a voice to the individuals.

How are the family who represent the best interests of the autistic people consulted about the support their relative receives?

Glenelg has a close working relationship with families. A large proportion of our individuals will have families whom we liaise with on a daily basis, and they are very involved in the individuals' lives. All families can attend 3 monthly review meetings and are consulted with any changes made to the individuals' person centred plan.

The registered manager will periodically send information to families regarding Glenelg's support.

What do you consider to be the main areas of development for the provision?

To maintain a consistent approach in the daily logs across the services. The PBS department has done a workshop on daily logs and offers ad hoc support to the services.

We would also like to develop our positive outcomes for our individuals. Although we feel we are supporting them well with is, we believe a positive outcome should further produce more positive outcomes.

What do you consider to be the main areas of strength for the provision?

The support provided is bespoke and person-centred to all our individuals and we strive for them to get the best possible outcomes they can through active support. We also use a strengths-based approach to develop the individuals' skills, independence, and achieve positive outcomes.