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**Multi-Equalities
Impact Assessment
Toolkit**

Form

2007

**Name of Policy:
ABERDEENSHIRE STRATEGY FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER**

Before commencing with the Multi-Equalities Impact Assessment (MEIA), please make reference to the MEIA Guidance Notes, which will give guidance on each of the sections included.

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Section One: Function / Policy Details*

(Page 4 of the Guidance Notes)

1.1

Name of Function / Policy	Aberdeenshire Strategy for People affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder
Lead Service / Partnership	<u>Aberdeenshire Council</u> in partnership with NHS Grampian and relevant Voluntary organisations
Policy Officer (Name / Position)	Sheena Swinhoe Strategic Development Officer
Impact Assessment Team (Names / Positions)	John Forrester – Specialist Practitioner, Grampian Autistic Society Mercy Yaor – Equalities Officer, Aberdeenshire Council Elaine Robertson – Strategic Development Officer, Housing and Social Work Service James Martin – Strategic Development Officer, Housing and Social Work Service Sheena Swinhoe – Strategic Development Officer, Housing and Social Work Service

*Policy could be formal or informal and may include strategy, project or practice.

1.2 Is this function / policy...

New? (✓)	Existing? (✓)
✓	

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1.3 What are the main aims of the policy?	To create a framework for developing services for children, young people, adults, families and carers affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) To ensure that services are co-ordinated, effective and efficient
1.4 Who are the main target groups / beneficiaries?	People affected by ASD Families and carers of people affected by ASD Relevant professionals
1.5 What are the intended outcomes of the policy?	People with ASD will have an improved quality of life The Action Plan that accompanies the Autism Spectrum Strategy details outcomes expected from each Action

Section 2: Information Gathering
(Page 5 of the Guidance Notes)

2.1 Gathering information and evidence used to assist the impact assessment process

Information / Evidence	✓relevant box	List details (source, date, scale etc.)
* Community consultation	✓	Initial Consultation with individuals and families to determine the priorities for the strategy and action plan
Research (including websites & legislation)	✓	Aberdeenshire Audit and Evaluation of Provision for Children and Young People with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (June 2006) ASPECT Consultancy Report – Executive Summary – A National Report on the Needs of Adults with Asperger Syndrome Next Steps – Scottish Autism Information Resource – The National Autistic Society Scotland Working Together to Support Autism – Aberdeenshire Council Guidance for

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		Schools and Community School Networks. Information for parents and carers with a child or young person recently diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder – NHS Education for Scotland
Officer knowledge and experience	✓	Knowledge of the Impact Assessment Team
Equalities monitoring data	✓	Information requested from GREC
Service user feedback (including complaints)	✓	Through the audit and evaluation of provision for children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders
Partner user feedback		
Other		

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Section 3: Assessing the Impacts
(Page 6 of the Guidance Notes)

What likely impacts or issues do the function / policy have for different people and communities in the following group(s)?

3.1 Identify and describe any likely positive, negative or neutral impacts.

Equality Target Group	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral Impact
Race			There can be cultural differences in how families deal with autism but approaches detailed in the strategy accommodate this as it is person centred and provides positive interventions for families. There is an issue regarding access to information about services for some minority ethnic groups which is addressed through making information available in different formats on request and through using link organisations such as the Gypsy Traveller Education and Information Project to take information into communities

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Gender	<p>It is known that there is a gender imbalance. Prevalence among boys is much higher than for girls, the ratio being 4:1 (PHIS 2001)</p> <p>Research undertaken in Aberdeenshire in 2006 identified a ratio of 5.5:1 male to female which is slightly greater than that reported by PHIS</p>		
Disability			<p>Although there are no negative impacts on disability from the strategy, there is an issue about how services are provided in Aberdeenshire. People with autism who do not have a learning disability or a mental health problem do not have a clear and agreed direction for accessing services. This disadvantages people at the high functioning end of the autism spectrum .This has been identified as an Action from the strategy</p>

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Age	<p>The strategy identifies the difference in assessment and service provision for children and adults. It also acknowledges the huge amount of work that has been done by the Education, Learning and Leisure service in developing and implementing the guidance for schools and community school networks “Working Together to Support Autism”</p> <p>The strategy recognises that there needs to be different services provided for adults with autism spectrum disorders and work is being done around this by the local authority and relevant voluntary organisations</p>		
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Religion & Belief			<p>The Impact Assessment Team felt that there was not enough evidence available to us to determine whether the strategy and action plan would have a significant positive or negative impact in relation to religion and belief. It was acknowledged that a small number of people and / or families might not accept the diagnosis of autism based on their belief. Some individuals and families refuse the offer of services however there is no evidence to suggest that this is purely on the basis of religion or belief</p>
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Sexual Orientation			There is evidence to suggest that there is a higher rate of homosexuality with people with ASD. This is most likely due to the fact that people are more open about sexuality as they are less aware of social norms and how people will react. Further research is required to evidence that the Autism Disorder strategy either has a neutral or positive impact
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<p>Other groups (please specify) Geographical Difference</p>	<p>The strategy identifies that there are geographical differences regarding accessibility to certain services. There are services based in Aberdeen that individuals and families from Aberdeenshire can access however these are more easily accessed by people within a reasonable travelling distance This is being addressed through the strategy with new services being developed in North and Central Aberdeenshire</p>		
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(If no impact has been identified, and this is justifiable, please go to 5.1)

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3.2 Have any cross cutting issues been identified?

The cross cutting issues you should consider for the purpose of this MEIA are employees, health, access (including rural isolation), low income, unemployed, homeless and carers, or any other relevant issue(s).

The following cross cutting issues have been identified

- Access to services is more difficult for individuals and families in a rural area, particularly the further away from Aberdeen you live
- There are particular issues around access to diagnostic services within the NHS

Section 4: Recommendations and Actions

(Page 7 of the Guidance Notes)

4.1 As a result of this assessment, consultation, research and available evidence collected, state whether there will need to be any changes made / planned to the function / policy. Please clearly detail practical actions you would take to reduce or remove any identified adverse / negative impact.

(Please ensure that recommendations and actions are SMART)

Recommendation	Action	Who	When	Expected Outcome
<p>There were no negative impacts identified from the assessment. However there are recommendations that the impact assessment group would like to make to the strategy implementation group regarding Actions that should be taken to address the needs of people with autism spectrum disorder who do not have a learning disability or a mental health problem. How this will be addressed needs to be spelt out clearly in the action plan.</p>	<p>Letter to the Strategy Implementation Group from the Impact Assessment Team asking for identified issues regarding access to services to be addressed</p>	<p>Impact Assessment Team</p>	<p>December 2007</p>	<p>Acknowledgement of letter and details of how recommendations form the Impact Assessment will be addressed</p>

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4.2 Detail any adverse impact that cannot be resolved, and justify the recommendation to continue with the policy.

Detail	Justification
NONE	

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Section 5: Performance Monitoring and Reporting
(Page 7 of the Guidance Notes)

5.1 Please explain **how** monitoring will be undertaken, **when** it will take place and **who** is responsible for undertaking it, making reference to any equalities action plans / service plans.

The strategy will be monitored by the Implementation group. It is envisaged that this group will meet quarterly and that the monitoring will be the main item on the agenda. The strategy document covers the period 2007-2010 and the Action plan will be reviewed annually to determine which actions have been achieved over the year, which are longer term and whether there is need to add new actions in response to either national or local changes in strategic direction.

Section 6: Publishing the Results of the Assessment
(Page 8 of the Guidance Notes)

Prior to publication, the following signatures are required:

1. Head of Service or
Service Representative

Signed:Name:Date:

2. Quality Assured by
(QA of the process followed is required by a MEIA trained officer)

Signed:Name:Date:

Please email the completed MEIA to the Policy Officer (Equalities), Chief Executive.