

www.nzgg.org.nz/asd

Website and resources on autism spectrum disorder

New resources on autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are now available to help health and education practitioners recognise signs and symptoms of possible ASD, and decide what action to take. These free resources can be viewed or downloaded at www.nzgg.org.nz/asd

The information on this interactive website is derived from the [New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline](#) (NZ ASD Guideline). The website and resources were independently developed by the New Zealand Guidelines Group, with funding from the Ministry of Health.

Background

The provision of quality information on recognition and early diagnosis was a priority of the Implementation Advisory Group. This group has people who have lived experience of ASD, who are parents, who are service providers and who are clinicians. With input from the wider autism community, the group has been prioritising more than 200 of the guideline recommendations needing action. Prioritising the recommendations has been necessary, as although in 2007 the New Zealand Government allocated \$17.5 million over 3.5 years toward the implementation of the guideline, it is not sufficient to implement all of the recommendations.

Priority projects include:

1. development and future delivery of specialist training in assessment and diagnosis
2. funding for coordination services across the country, organised by District Health Boards, for the assessment and diagnosis process
3. a series of web-based and other resources for all people who may encounter someone with possible ASD. The resources provide information about recognition of ASD, initial assessment and referral, and the diagnosis process. The resources include a self-test and training tools to upskill people from a range of professional backgrounds (now available at: www.nzgg.org.nz/asd)
4. a discussion paper on the best international assessment and diagnostic tools to assist clinicians in choosing which ones to use.

When integrated and fully implemented, these projects will provide clinical and education professionals in particular with better tools, information and skills to ensure that the assessment and diagnosis processes are more timely and informed than they have been in the past.