



Expert Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Background

Altogether Autism is a national information service regarding Autism Spectrum Disorders contracted by the Ministry of Health, and operated in partnership between LIFE Unlimited and Parent to Parent New Zealand.

The objective of the service is to provide a comprehensive range of advice and information to people with ASD, their families, providers of services, and to other interested people. As well as advice regarding services that are available locally and nationally, Altogether Autism is committed to providing comprehensive expert advice founded on evidence based best practice.

To this end Altogether Autism has established an Expert Advisory Group.

Purpose and Role

The Expert Advisory Group is established as a key element of meeting the objectives of the Altogether Autism service. The role of the Expert Advisory Group will be to provide a forum and framework whereby the best and most up to date information and opinion can be provided regarding best practice in the diagnosis, intervention and provision of services for people with ASD. The group will provide a platform for provision of multi-disciplinary advice and commentary.

Principles

The Expert Advisory Group will:

- Use and reference best available evidence in the provision of information and commentary
- Make best endeavours to communicate academic and professional material into information which is readily understandable by people with ASD and by the general public
- Demonstrate a commitment to the improvement of services for and information about ASD in New Zealand
- Identify relevant linkages to the Treaty of Waitangi wherever appropriate to inform its work

Composition

The Expert Advisory Group comprises Members and Associates.

17 December 2007

“Members” are people appointed as a Member of the Expert Advisory Group and who will have a regular and active role in the group on account of their expertise, knowledge and experience in the field of ASD.

“Associates” are people appointed as an Associate of the Expert Advisory Group and who will have an as required role in the group on account of their expertise in an area of need for many people with ASD, and their special interest and commitment in the field of ASD. Associates may not necessarily be ‘experts’ in ASD.

The following representation and fields of expertise will be sought:

Members - Expert Advisory Group

A core team of with a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 8 Members

- Clinical or Educational Psychologist
- Teacher / Tertiary Educator
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Paediatrician
- Occupational Therapist
- Psychiatrist
- Lawyer
- Employment specialist
- Community Supports / Needs Assessor
- Maori issues
- Pacific issues

Associates

A wider team of up to 10 additional Associates

- Neurologist
- Educationalist
- Dentist
- Audiologist
- Optician
- Asian issues
- New migrant issues

Reporting

- The Expert Advisory Group reports to and is appointed by the Governance Group of Altogether Autism (comprised of the CEOs of LIFE Unlimited and Parent to Parent New Zealand and co-opted members).
- For day to day operations the Expert Advisory Group will be convened and led by the Clinical Consultant, Altogether Autism. The Clinical Consultant is Tanya Breen, Clinical Psychologist, Hamilton.

17 December 2007

Term of Office

- The ordinary term of appointment will be for 2 years
- Members and Associates may resign by the provision of 1 months notice
- Members and Associates may be terminated by the provision of 1 months notice by Altogether Autism. Termination may be for any reason, which may include for example the Member or Associate:
 - being regularly unavailable to fulfil the expected duties
 - entering into employment or association which constitutes a significant conflict of interest with Altogether Autism
 - engaging in actions or public commentary which is prejudicial or contrary to the objectives of Altogether Autism

Appointment and Termination

Appointments of Members and Associates of the Expert Advisory Group will be made by the Governance Group of Altogether Autism. The Governance Group will seek the recommendations of the Clinical Consultant in consultation with the Expert Advisory Group on:

- Appointment and co-option of new Members and Associates to fill vacancies or to meet needs in specific areas of expertise
- Appointment of existing Members and Associates for an extended term
- Termination of existing Members or Associates

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of Members & Associates of the Expert Advisory Group are:

1. In response to requests from the Clinical Consultant to
 - critically review academic literature, providing short summaries of main findings and limitations
 - develop and/or provide feedback on web-based information or handouts
 - provide answers to queries with respect to clinical and other issues for people contacting the service

Members - Estimated no more than 4 hours per month

Associates – Estimated no more than 2 hours per month

2. Responses to requests will be provided in a timely manner. The expected target is response within 3 working days, or negotiation of suitable alternative time frame. Responses will be provided in an agreed format and using a template provided by Altogether Autism to ensure consistency.
3. Participate in teleconference or email discussions initiated by the Clinical Consultant when the expertise and views of the Expert

Advisory Group is required in order to come to an evidence based position on current best practice

Members - Estimated no more than 4 hours per month
Associates – Estimated no more than 2 hours per month

4. To provide professional development and training on specific ASD matters within the context of
 - regional meetings with providers and stakeholders
 - groups of professionals and specialists eg GPs, teachers

Members - Estimated no more than half a day per quarter
Associates – If required

5. To attend Meetings of the Altogether Autism Expert Advisory Group for the purposes of supporting the overall aims of Altogether Autism, sharing and presenting research and expertise, and networking. All Members and Associates will be required to attend introductory training (Scheduled for Wednesday 26 March 2008 in Hamilton – alternative introductory arrangements may be provided in 6 months time)

Members & Associates - Estimated definitely one, possibly two days per year

6. In the longer term, to assist Altogether Autism undertake research in ASD, with successful publication.

Members & Associates - Time commitment negotiated on a case by case basis

Employment and Payment

- Members and Associates will be engaged by LIFE Unlimited on behalf of Altogether Autism as a contractor (on a standard Contract for Service contract)
- Remuneration will be negotiated with each Member and Associate for an agreed hourly and daily rate
- Payment will be made on production of a monthly invoice detailing time incurred on assignments requested by the Clinical Consultant
- Reimbursement will be made for travel costs approved by Altogether Autism to initial training, to other training events or meetings requested, and for any other expenses agreed in advance by the Clinical Consultant on behalf of Altogether Autism

Conflict of Interest

Members and Associates will be required to document any potential conflict of interest prior to providing expert advice on any particular matter requested.

17 December 2007

The Clinical Consultant in consultation with the Governance Group of Altogether Autism will then decide the extent if any to which the Member should be excluded from discussion or input into that particular discussion.

The intention of this provision is to safeguard the interests of the Member or Associate and his professional standing, and the reputation and impartiality of Altogether Autism. For example a conflict of interest may occur in the event that advice and information is being provided about a service, intervention or other matter in which the Member or Associate has a financial interest, professional or academic involvement with, or organisational responsibility for a specific treatment.

Person Specification

The following attributes and qualifications will be considered important in making appointment to the roles of Member & Associate of the Expert Advisory Group Altogether Autism

- Respected reputation within NZ academic, professional, and or service delivery community
- Affiliated to appropriate professional body and hold current practicing certificate where appropriate
- Commitment to working collaboratively with other professional and Members and Associates of the Expert Advisory Group to further the aims of Altogether Autism
- Commitment to evidence based approach – evidence from published papers, articles, conference presentations
- Ability to express thoughts clearly and succinctly in forms readily understood by general population (ie not only to an academic/professional audience) - evidence from published papers, articles, conference presentations
- Ability to present in public settings, provide training, translating academic and professional concepts into readily understood concepts to suit the audience
- Employment arrangements allow for contribution of time on demand as per the Roles and Responsibilities above
- Readily accessible by broadband email and telephone, able to provide electronic copy of advice template in MS Word or compatible format