

Berkshire Autistic Society

Introduction to Autism and Asperger's Syndrome for professionals working in the Criminal Justice System

BAS trainers have used Skills for Care funding to deliver workshops to almost 50 individuals working in different areas of Thames Valley Police. The aim of the training was to raise awareness, understanding and ability to communicate with individuals on the autism spectrum that come into contact with the police.

What we wanted to achieve

The training aims were as follows:

- To increase awareness of Autism and Asperger's Syndrome
- To provide individuals with ways of identifying someone who is potentially on the Autism Spectrum
- To provide strategies for effective communication with people with Autism
- To give an overview of sensory sensitivities and how these may impact upon the individual
- To promote understanding of Autism as a spectrum

What we did

We organised the sessions with a range of different teams – the PCSO's and neighbourhood police, classroom trainers for police officers, human resource managers for Thames Valley police and Youth offending service.

We worked on some case studies which are presented along with this report to dissect relevant information from Autism theory and consider strategies for supporting individuals with Autism.

What we achieved

We identified a need for a quick to reference sheet on how to deal with individuals with Autism in an arrest situation and produced a quick reference sheet on simple communication strategies and how to identify if someone is presenting as Autistic.

We provided a hand out of possibly sensory responses as a resource for each department.

Further Resources are available at:
www.autism.org.uk/working-with/criminal-justice.aspx

What we learnt

In conclusion we decided that future police training would need to be:

- Targeted for the departments within the police that would most benefit
- Delivered on a rolling schedule as the turnover of staff is high
- Time and cost effective as many staff members do not have much time to attend
- Providing information that can be used by all staff

Our observations were as follows:

- The training was most helpful for the teams with most contact with the general public. PCSO's seemed to benefit and engage from this.
- The training within the other departments was more helpful if adapted to tackle helping police officers who may be on the spectrum to perform their job effectively
- The sensory information was particularly relevant for this training – e.g. turning sirens/radios off

Further information can be found at:

www.autismberkshire.org.uk

Skills for Care Recommends

Skills for Care has helped to develop a range of resources that directly help employers and those caring for people with autism.

Autism skills and knowledge list

This enables individual workers, or services and teams, to work out whether they have the knowledge and skills needed to provide a good service to people who have autism.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Autism

Autism qualifications

Two new autism qualifications were launched in September 2014. These are a Level 3 Award and a Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Individuals on the Autistic Spectrum.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Autism

Workforce Development Fund

Funding is available for employers to claim back costs for the learning and development of their staff, including Autism units and qualifications.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/wdf

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