

## **Question 1**

What is the Autism Spectrum?

### **Answer:**

The Autism Spectrum is a term used to describe different conditions and includes Autism, Asperger's syndrome. This term "spectrum" is used to reflect that while all people with this condition share certain strengths and weaknesses it will affect them in different ways. Despite the differences everyone with the condition will experience some degree of developmental difficulty in the following areas.

1. Social communication
2. Social interaction
3. Thinking and Behaviour

As such, it will affect how a person communicates and relates to other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them.

For further information please see 'A guide for families' page 3&4 'What is ASD?'

## **Question 2**

I am concerned that my child may have ASD.

What should I do and who should I speak to?

### **Answer:**

As a parent/carer you may have concerns about your child or young person's development or whether he/she may have ASD. The first person you should approach is your Health Visitor, a professional involved in your child's care or your GP.

Once this professional is sure that your child or young person is experiencing difficulties they will refer him or her for an assessment.

This may be to a Paediatrician, Child Development Clinic, another relevant Health Care professional or directly to the Autism Service. If your child is being referred directly to the Autism Service, the referrer will complete a standardised Autism Services referral form by seeking information from you.

For further information please see 'Autism a guide for families' page 5/6/"ASD diagnosis – What to expect".

For further information on what is involved in an autism assessment please see 'Six Steps of Autism Care' (summary leaflet)

### **Question 3**

My child has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. I'd like to find out what services are available .Where can I find up to date information?

#### **Answer:**

Regardless of when your child was diagnosed you can still access current ASD Services.

If you have current concerns regarding your child please contact the **Autism Service on 028 82 83 59 83 for further advice and information.**