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Evaluation of Autism Education Trust Training Hubs Programme, 2013-15: Final Report

Stephen Cullen

Mairi Ann Cullen

Geoff Lindsay

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CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Autism Education Trust's (AET) training hubs Programme 2013-15, represents a widening and deepening of the earlier AET (School Age) Programme 2011-13. The 2013-15 Programme involved the development of new Early Years (EY) and Post-16 (P-16) training materials for workforces and settings supporting EY and P-16 children and young people with autism. The Programme consists of three stages of training which are delivered via four EY and four P-16 training hubs, along with resource materials such as EY and P-16 National Standards and Competency Frameworks, and an autism guide for parents and carers, *Working together with your child's school*.

The independent evaluation of the AET Programme 2013-15 was carried out by CEDAR, University of Warwick. An interim report on the Programme was published in April, 2014[1], and reported on findings from the first year of the Programme. This current report is the final report and focuses on the following elements of both the AET Programme 2011-13, and the AET Programme 2013-15:

- Follow-up data relating to the AET (school age) Programme 2011-13:

  - From interviews with staff at nine case study schools which had undertaken elements of the AET Programme; and one Area SENCO
  - Interviews with staff at an additional four case study schools which were also visited by evaluators.

- Data relating to the 2013-15 Early Years (EY) and Post-16 (P-16) Programme

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[1] Stephen Cullen, Mairi-Ann Cullen, Geoff Lindsay (April, 2014), 'Evaluation of Autism Education trust Training Hubs Programme, 2013-15: Interim Report' (Warwick), http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cedar/projects/current/aet2013-15/final_aet_13-15_interim_report_7_april.pdf

- o Data regarding the continued development of the EY and P-16 Programme materials since the interim report
- o Data from interviews with the AET hub leads for EY (four leads), and P-16 (four leads)
- o Reports on interviews and observations undertaken during three EY settings visits
- o Data gathered from two P-16 settings
- o Data from an e-survey of autism, SEND and other appropriate Local Authority leads relating to knowledge of the AET Programme and its dissemination
- o Evaluation data from EY training at Tiers 1, 2, and 3
- o Evaluation data from P-16 training at Tiers 1, 2, and 3.

1.1 Headline findings:

AET Programme 2011-13, follow-up

- A wide range of school staff reported evidence of the positive impact of AET training on individual staff members, whole school settings, on pupils with autism, and on their parents/carers
- Although the majority of school staff interviewees were aware of the AET National Standards (NS) and Competency Framework (CF), there were still schools that were unaware of either the NS or the CF, or, being aware, had done little to implement them
- School visits and observations showed that, typically, the schools were willing and able to make reasonable adjustments in their provision to support children with autism.

AET Programme 2013-15

- The development teams for the EY and P-16 materials successfully produced, piloted and delivered Tiers 2 and 3 of the Programme, along with the NS and CF for EY and P-16 settings, in addition to a guide for parents/carers on working with their children's schools

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- AET training hub leads for both EY and P-16 reported that their experience of the Tier 1 roll out had been, overall, very positive, with targets being exceeded
- Unlike the AET Programme 2011-13, the hub leads for the EY and P-16 training faced a wide range of settings to which it was necessary to market the training. This was a challenge that necessitated investment in preparation and marketing before any training was delivered
- Tier 2 training for EY hubs was slow to start, but picked-up, or was expected to
- The reception of Tier 2 training and materials was good
- At the time of the hub lead interviews (December 2014-January 2015), very few Tier 3 training courses had been run. Given the staggered roll-out of the three Tiers, and the structure of the Programme, this was expected
- Tier 3 training that had been delivered was well received and regarded as very successful by the hub leads
- The hub leads fully appreciated the role of the AET National Standards and Competency Frameworks in supporting and embedding good autism provision
- The EY settings visited provided evidence of a range of autism-focused change in environment as well as in staff attitudes, approaches and understanding
- The P-16 settings provided an example of the successful use of the Programme to train Learning Support Assistants and Student Services staff in order to provide better autism support for college students
- Data from the EY and P-16 roll out of Tiers 1, 2 and 3 was strongly positive.

1.2 Detailed findings:

AET Programme 2011-13, follow-up case study schools:

- Thirteen follow-up schools, and one area SENCO took part in the evaluation in the autumn term of 2014. Of these, two were mainstream secondary schools with resource bases, the rest were mainstream primary and one special school. There was clear evidence that AET training had positively impacted upon staff and pupils in the schools, Further, there was also evidence, particularly from schools that were visited, that reasonable adjustments were made in the school environments to support pupils with autism. It should be noted, nonetheless, that the evaluation team had particular difficulty in recruiting mainstream secondary schools to the evaluation, and that the lack of data from that source might reflect on the level of impact that training is having in mainstream secondary schools.

AET Programme 2013-15, the development of the EY and P-16 materials:

- The 2013-15 Programme involved the development of new Early Years (EY) and Post-16 (P-16) training materials for workforces and settings supporting EY and P-16 children and young people with autism. The Programme consisted of three tiers of training. The 2013-15 Programme also involved the development and roll-out of National Standards and Competency Frameworks for EY and P-16 settings. In addition, guides for parents and carers on working with their children's schools were produced. All this development work was carried out to timetable by the EY and P-16 development teams. There were some difficulties surrounding the piloting of Tiers 2 and 3, but these were related to unavoidable clashes with the summer vacation in 2014.

AET Programme 2013-15, EY and P-16 training hubs:

- The training hub structure continued to prove its worth as an effective method of roll-out for the multi-tiered AET training. Both those hubs which had previously been involved with the roll-out of the AET Programme 2011-13, and the new hubs recruited for the roll-out of the AET Programme 2013-15 were successful in delivering the 2013-15 Programme.

AET Programme 2013-15, Early Years settings:

- Three EY settings (nurseries) took part in the evaluation and were visited by CEDAR researchers, who interviewed staff and made observations of changes in the settings resulting from the AET Programme 2013-15. The AET EY training was highly valued by all the interviewees' irrespective of each nursery's prior knowledge of autism and autism provision. The three nurseries represented different degrees of progression in autism support, but all were strongly committed to enhancing that support and accessing additional AET training. In addition, all three had made autism-friendly changes to the environment of their nurseries.

AET Programme 2013-15, Post-16 settings:

- Two Further Education (FE) colleges took part in the evaluation, and provided evidence of the use of Tier 1 P-16 training. In the FE colleges, two large groups of staff from student services staff and learning support were trained. The training was seen to be successful, and further training was planned, with the intention of extending it to teaching staff at the FE colleges.

AET Programme 2013-15, Local Authority (LA) leads survey

- A small e-survey was carried out, with relevant LA leads involved with autism support, and SEND support. The e-survey represented a snapshot of LA leads' knowledge of the AET Programme for schools, EY and P-16 settings, and the ways in which they promote the Programme, the AET National Standards and Competency Frameworks. The survey showed high levels of awareness of the AET Programme, and the extent to which the LA leads were involved in disseminating it. This, in turn, suggests that fully developing an LA strategy might well be advantageous for the continuing roll-out of the AET Programme.

AET Programme 2013-15, EY roll-out, Tiers 1, 2, and 3:

- The evaluation results showed that the EY Tier 1 training, 'Making Sense of Autism', was very positively received. It stimulated a desire for further training as well as reflection on changes that could be made in practice. It increased delegates' awareness of, and knowledge about, autism.
- The findings reported here indicate that the EY Tier 2 training, 'Good Autism Practice', was highly effective in improving delegates' knowledge and understanding in four key areas: autism, working in partnership to support children with autism, enabling environments for children with autism, and learning and development of children with autism.

- Overall, the EY Tier 3 delegates were positive about the training, 'Leading Good Autism Practice'. The majority reported improved knowledge and understanding in relation to: national frameworks for good practice; how to support staff to develop good practice; and how to provide staff with tools to develop their own provision. A minority did not find it quite so useful. There was some feedback indicating that perhaps the content was not quite right in particular, that the material needed a stronger focus on autism (although we understand that these concerns have already been addressed).

AET Programme 2013-15, P-16 roll out, Tiers 1, 2, and 3:

- The findings reported here show that the delegates viewed the post-16 Tier 1, Raising Awareness training very positively. It had increased knowledge and understanding, and stimulated reflection and the desire to make positive changes in practice.

- The evaluation findings show that the Post-16 Tier 2 training, 'Making Sense of Autism: For Practitioners', was very highly regarded by delegates. A large majority reported improved knowledge and understanding in relation to four key areas: understanding autism in relation to individuals; understanding how to engage each learner with autism; adjusting and differentiating the curriculum for learners with autism; and enabling participation of learners with autism. The fact that the majority of delegates took time at the end of the training to specify immediate and longer term changes they'd like to make, based on the training, is a strong indication that it promoted genuine reflection on practice and created a desire to change practice to better support learners with autism

- The findings reported here indicate that the Post-16 Tier 3 training, 'Making Sense of Autism: For Managers, was highly effective in improving delegates knowledge and understanding in four key areas: leading organisational practice in relation to individuals with autism; supporting learners to build personal and professional relationships; using the curriculum to support meaningful outcomes for adult life; and enabling participation of learners with autism. It should be noted, however, that at the time of reporting, numbers of delegates to Tier 3 training were still relatively low.

1.3 Recommendations

The evaluation team suggest the following recommendations:

- There is a need for some kind of network support for settings in order to support embedding and sustain learning from the AET programme. Some settings are part of networks – informal and formal – which support sustainability of autism education learning and provision. But it is not the case that all settings are currently in that position. Interviewees in a number of schools and EY settings, in particular, indicated that they would like to be able to benefit from external support networks. It might be the case that settings that have undertaken AET training could be assisted to develop links with other settings and organisations that would help to maintain the benefits of AET training.

- There is a demand for accreditation of settings in relation to AET training and standards. Settings would very much like to be able to work towards formal recognition of their autism provision in the shape of some kind of AET quality mark. AET accreditation would, it is believed, be yet another way of enthusing staff, embedding learning, and building parent/carer confidence in autism provision for their children.

- There are some problems around the two day EY and P-16 training at Tier 2, both in terms of marketing it, and in terms of staff attending. It is very difficult for staff to be released for two days, there will be funding issues, and there has been relatively slow take up of Tier 2.

- Some P-16 hub lead interviewees suggested that in FE settings in particular, it might be best to market Tier 3 training first, and, in that way, get senior managers to spread the word in institutions that are organisationally complex and characterised by high numbers of sessional staff.

- The AET Programme is a work in progress, as is the evaluation of the development and roll-out of the Programme. Future evaluation could usefully shift its focus from materials development, structures and roll-out, to further establishing the outcomes and impact for children, young people, their parents and carers.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

The Autism Education Trust's (AET) training hubs Programme represented a widening and deepening of the earlier AET (School Age) Programme, 2011-13. The 2013-15 Programme involved the development of new Early Years (EY) and Post-16 (P-16) training materials for workforces and settings supporting EY and P-16 children and young people with autism. The Programme consisted of three tiers of training which were delivered via four EY and four P-16 training hubs. The 2013-15 Programme also involved the development and roll-out of National Standards and Competency Frameworks for EY and P-16 settings. In addition, guides for parents and carers on working with their children's schools were produced.

The evaluation of the AET Programme 2013-15 was carried out by CEDAR, the University of Warwick. This is the second, and final, report of the evaluation. The interim report[2] identified a number of headline findings:

- there was evidence of the embedding of AET Programme 2011-13 training knowledge in the case study schools, along with evidence of the positive impact of the training in terms of whole school, individual staff and pupils
- the hub leads from the AET Programme 2011-13 regarded the Programme as being a success
- in relation to the AET Programme 2013-15, the EY and P-16 development teams produced the first stage – 'Making Sense of Autism' – material to time, developing the Programme to meet the specific needs of the EY and P-16 workforces and settings
- interviews with the EY and P-16 training hub leads showed universal optimism as to the likely success of the Programme roll-out

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[2] Stephen Cullen, Mairi-Ann Cullen, Geoff Lindsay (April, 2014), 'Evaluation of Autism Education trust Training Hubs Programme, 2013-15: Interim Report' (Warwick), http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cedar/projects/current/aet2013-15/final_aet_13-15_interim_report_7_april.pdf

- data from the pilot phase (January-April 2014) of the 'Making Sense of Autism' training was strongly positive in all respects.

This report builds those findings, and presents findings from data gathered up until mid-February, 2015.

2.2 This report

This report is organised in three sections:

> Part 1: AET Programme, 2011-13
> Part 2: AET Programme, 2013-15
> Part 3: Evaluation data

Part 1 represents findings related to the school age AET Programme, and seeks to establish the continuing impact and the sustainability of the Programme. CEDAR's evaluation of the AET Programme 2011-13[3] established the success of the materials, training, and organisation of the Programme for schools. In the interim report of the evaluation of the AET Programme 2013-15, a small number of mainstream primary schools that had undertaken AET training in 2011-13 were followed-up in order to generate data on the continued impact and sustainability of Programme learning. For this report, nine schools that had undertaken the AET Programme took part in follow-up interviews. The nine schools consisted of six mainstream primary schools (two of which had previously been followed-up for the interim report), one special school, and two mainstream secondary schools with resource bases. Also, an area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), employed by 17 local schools (a mix of secondary and primary schools, plus a special school) was interviewed about the impact of AET training on schools in her area.

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[3] Cullen, M.A., Cullen, S., Lindsay, G., & Arweck, E (2013), *Evaluation of Autism Education Trust Training Hubs Programme, 2011-13: Final Report*. Coventry: CEDAR, University of Warwick: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cedar/projects/current/autismeducationtrust/aet_-_final_report1_pdf.pdf

In addition to the follow-up work with the 9 schools, four mainstream primary schools which undertook AET training in 2013-14 were visited by CEDAR researchers in order to establish impact and sustainability.

Part 2 of this report focuses on the AET Programme 2013-15, its development, roll-out, reception and impact, at both Early Years (EY) and Post-16 (P-16) levels. For both EY and P-16, the material developers were interviewed, as were the AET hub leads for all eight hubs (four EY, and four P-16). In addition, three EY settings were visited by CEDAR researchers, and information gathered from two P-16 settings, in order to establish the impact and sustainability of the AET EY and P-16 programmes.

Part 3 of the report presents the findings from the roll-out of the training sessions. A sample of questionnaires completed by delegates attending the three tiers of EY and P-16 training was taken across the delivery hubs.

PART 1: AET Programme, 2011-13

3 FOLLOW-UP: SCHOOLS

3.1 Introduction

The AET Programme 2011-13 delivered a programme of professional development and training to the school workforce through seven regional training hubs. The programme consisted of three levels of training at general, enhanced and specialist levels (Levels 1, 2, and 3 respectively). As part of the evaluation of the 2011-13 Programme, qualitative data was gathered through interview work with a small number of school staff, pupils and parents. Findings from that qualitative work were reported in the final evaluation report for the 2011-13 Programme[4]. That school-focused data capture involved six schools being visited by a CEDAR researcher, with staff, pupils and parents being interviewed. For the 2013-15 evaluation, staff from five of these schools were interviewed in January 2014, and agreed to be interviewed again during the autumn term of 2014 (the sixth school was unable to take part).

During the autumn term, 2014, the five schools were approached for further follow-up interviews. However, only two of those schools were in a position to continue to take part in the evaluation. In two cases, changes in school staff prevented continued involvement, and the other two schools failed to respond to requests to take part. To increase the number of schools involved in follow-up evaluation of the AET Programme 2011-13, an additional 20 schools were contacted to see if they would take part in the evaluation. In total, 13 were successfully recruited to the evaluation. The schools were suggested to the evaluation team by AET school hub leads. The intention was to gather data in relation to the embedding and impact of AET Programme training at school level, and represented schools from the north-west, north-east, and the Midlands. Of the 13 schools involved in follow-up work, 9 provided key members of staff for telephone interview, and four schools were visited by

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[4] Cullen et al (2013)

CEDAR researchers, in addition, an area SENCO was also interviewed. The schools involved represented a variety of mainstream primary, mainstream primary with specialist provision, and mainstream secondary with specialist resource base, and a special school. Staff interviewed included, deputy head teachers, SENCOs, teaching assistants (TAs), and higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs).

The findings relating to follow-up schools are presented here as findings from telephone interviews with staff at the nine schools, plus the area SENCO, followed by findings from the visits to four schools.

3.2 Follow-up schools

3.2.1 Introduction

This section of the report presents findings from 10 semi-structured interviews with school staff, being four SENCOs, three Assistant Head Teachers, one lead Teaching Assistant (TA), one Head Teacher, and one area SENCO. The interviews were conducted by telephone, recorded (with informed consent), fully transcribed, and analysed for themes derived from the interview questions, with additional themes which emerged from interviewee-generated topics.

3.2.2 Views of AET training

The interviewees' views of all three levels of the AET training was uniformly positive. The training was seen to be high quality, appropriate training from an acknowledged and recognised autism training body, which has Department for Education (DfE) endorsement. Talking about staff responses to whole school, Level 1 AET training, one primary school SENCO commented:

> *There was very, very, really positive feedback. There were lots of really practical ideas in the training and everyone was so keen to try the ideas. Also, again, that light bulb moment, like, 'ah, that's why that happened', or, 'I never thought about that' – a lot of the sensory things. There's so many that unless you've got that knowledge you would never have thought of it. So, they really enjoyed it, and there's a lot of interest [among the staff] to go for the Level 2 course.* (S7)

The majority of schools that undertook Level 1 training included all school staff – teachers, TAs, receptionists, dinner staff, and caretakers – in the training. However, some schools restricted the training to teacher and TAs only, and there was a problem one of the secondary schools with recruiting staff to the training. The lead TA from this secondary school argued that in his view the senior leadership was not sufficiently supportive of autism education. As a result, the Level 1 training was optional for school staff, and only 30 out of 170 staff attended. Nonetheless, the staff that did attend were pleased with the training, and requested more.

The training was also welcomed by the co-ordinator for autism education from the special school. Teachers and TAs from the school undertook the Level 2 training, while the co-ordinator took Level 2 and 3. She noted that the staff had found the training valuable, and effective in that *'it was really good just to keep fresh the ideas and give talking points, and for those who needed the skills it was good for them to have that input as well'* (S9).

The positive views of the training that characterised the findings in the earlier evaluation reports (Cullen *et al*, 2013, 2014) continued to be expressed by interviewees in this follow-up stage of the evaluation.

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3.2.3 Impact: change as a result of AET training

The school interviewees represented schools that had first undertaken the AET training in 2012, 2013, and 2014. A key focus of the interviews was to establish the impact of the training (along with evidence of embedding; see below). Evidence of impact was sought in relation to individual school staff, whole school level, children, and parents. The findings presented here in relation to impact represent practitioner observation and reflection.

3.2.4 Impact: school staff

Interviewees were able to provide numerous examples of the impact of AET training on individual members of staff. Typically, interviewees explained that awareness levels rose and staff understanding of autism improved. Change at this level was seen to be important in that it was a necessary step before improvements could be made for children with autism. A SENCO from a secondary school (with over 30 children with a diagnosis of autism) who was also head of the school's resource base for children with special educational needs, was enthusiastic about her experience of Level 2 training, and how it had enabled her to change her 'mind-set' with regard to autism provision:

> *The level 2 was very good in that it taught me a lot about autism because when I took on the role, they gave me the role because I was a good manager not because I knew a lot about autism. It sounds strange but it was because of where the base was. I had taught all the children in the base and knew them but it was more that they wanted somebody that could manage it very well and it was those skills that gave me that role not the autism so I was really pleased because they taught me to change my mind-set and that is what the key is I think, it's about the mind-set about how you view a pupil with autism and by changing your mind-set you change your approach and by changing your approach you change your understanding and so on and that was*

the key I think. That level 2 really taught me how I needed to change my mind-set. (S1)

The same interviewee also provided an example of how the AET training impacted on the way in which a teacher responded to children with autism. Prior to the AET training, the teacher had persisted in seeing anxiety-driven behavior as 'naughty' behaviour, but the Level 2 training enabled the teacher to understand the underlying causes and to change her approach to the children:

There is one lady that stands out […] she started in November, and she came in with extremely high expectations and was extremely assertive towards the pupils and we found her to be too much for them actually and we wanted her to soften. When we'd explain to her 'can you please treat the child like this' she would say 'but they're just being naughty' and I was really praying that that level 2 would actually save me from some difficult conversations and it did. She came back and without actually saying 'oh I've been treating them differently' she came back and she just completely changed her ways with them but I was very heavily relying on the training, hoping that it would do that. (S1)

Changes in the way in which school staff perceived behaviour on the part of children with autism was mentioned by four of the interviewees, and the area SENCO also believed that one impact of the training on schools in her area had been a reduction in temporary exclusions (usually associated with behaviour); although she noted that she could not be sure that it was cause and effect. The lead TA from the secondary school S2 (where only a minority of staff had attended the AET training) explained that while there had been positive impact for some staff, she nonetheless found that *'I fight a losing battle saying this is not behaviour for behaviour's sake, this is autism and sensory issues'* (S2). To illustrate this, she gave the example of a boy who

had been diagnosed with autism who was, despite her advice, still being give detentions for 'behaviour'; however she had been able to ensure that the detentions were carried out in the resource base – *'which is a quiet space and there's nobody else there. But it's not the answer'* (S2). The issue at this secondary school appeared to stem from a lack of positive leadership on autism provision at the senior levels of the school management. The area SENCO (not from the same hub, or area as S2) also noted that she had the most difficulty with secondary schools when it came to convincing them of the importance of AET, and AET style, training for their staff.

One of the primary schools (S10) which had carried out whole school staff AET training saw changes in the interaction of a range of their staff with children with autism. The interviewee (a SENCO) gave the example from dinner staff interactions:

> *I think the biggest impact really was the dinner ladies. They were coming up to me afterwards and saying 'Wow, I just thought this child was naughty. I didn't realise. And it explains a lot'. Because some of the children, they call them fussy eaters, and they're not; they're children with autism. And it's difficult with a school dinner, when the plate's orange, and you've got yellow. And the dinner ladies used to be like 'Just eat it' and now they're 'You don't have to eat it. Have a different plate' and it's just lovely. Made it much happier.* (S10)

There was an appreciation that an important impact on staff from the training was in individuals' understanding and awareness. A head teacher of a primary school made this point in relation to a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) whose lack of autism education during her initial teacher training had left her ill-equipped to support a child with autism. However, this situation changed for the NQT following the AET training:

I think the teacher who is working with this particular boy is a newly qualified teacher. She has just gone from a rabbit in the headlights to actually. And I think part of it is it's not just about … anybody can come in and give strategies but it's about understanding and understanding what makes a child like that tick and what works for them and actually getting inside their head to try and understand why their behaviour might be in a certain way; that's been invaluable. (S5)

The head teacher further commented that the NQT had, prior to the training, *'known nothing about autism […] And I'm not exaggerating. She didn't know anything at all about it'* (S5).

3.2.5 Impact: whole school

Whole school change was identified by all the primary school interviewees and by the special school interviewee. Whole school impact included changes in staff awareness, the acceptance of the need for 'reasonable adjustment', to specific whole school changes in practice such as visual timetables, queuing, and seating.

At the level of awareness, the autism lead from the special school explained that the training (Level 2) had helped re-focus the school:

In terms of the impact that had, it just raised awareness again and made us think again about what we're doing. From that we identified children that had got sensory profiles [and] it gave us an ability to raise awareness of what you need to be doing for these children. (S9)

A primary school SENCO gave examples of specific whole school impact, and explained that:

> *We've bought cushions to put on the seats for a couple of children to improve their posture, how they're sitting, and also sloping boards. We are implementing the star thing […] We've also all had to look at when we go out on visits […] we've looked at these risk assessments again because we had a incident on a trip and so we said, through the training, how could we have avoided that and identified these risks?*
> (S7)

One of the interviewees provided a list of developments in teaching practice and changes in provision that had been implemented in the primary school as a result of the AET training. The school had undertaken all levels of the AET training, with all staff (including all teachers, TAs, dinner time staff, PE mentors, canteen staff, office staff and the SEN school governor) having completed Level 1 training; the lead autism support TA took Level 2, while the SENCO did Level 3. In addition, the parent support group also undertook Level 1 training. This whole school approach was enhanced by an audit that led to the following whole school changes

- *Some of our pupils have a Feelings Book in which they can write how they feel during their day. They can ask staff to read their book and write a reply or chat to them. The book goes home as well as a means of communicating between home and school.*

- *A Time Out Card so that pupils can show the red side and leave the classroom without needing to ask permission. Each pupil has their own special routine or place to which they can go to calm down or relax.*

- *Visual Timetables in all classes and referred to throughout the day.*

- *Much more consideration given when planning trips – seating on buses or coaches – when to eat – where to eat – who to sit by – length of journey. Some parents will drive their child to a venue or from a venue. Specific staff will go on a trip to support a particular pupil.*

- *In PE more thought is given to partners and the way apparatus is set out, the noise of the activity, a quiet area, and choices in activities.*

- *Moving around the school – who goes at the front / back of the line.*

- *A greater level of understanding regarding completing tasks and time given.*

- *Stepped instructions accompanied by visual cues.*

- *More progress has been made as pupils are happier.*

- *Homework Club runs in school during lunchtimes (double whammy as pupils don't enjoy going out in the heat, the wind, the rain and don't enjoy completing homework at home!).*

- *Lego Club runs at lunchtimes, twice a week, plus a Top Trumps Club.*

- *PE Mentors are out at break and over lunch and specifically target pupils to provide buddy support.*

- *Lunchtime Buddy Club where pupils can eat their lunch in a quiet room – supervised at all times – and play games or read.*

- *Teaching Assistants work across 2 classrooms so that there is continuity for pupils if staff are absent. Also helps to reduce reliance on just 1 person.*

(S10)

These changes resulted from the school senior management team's decision to prioritise support for the 11 children in the school with a diagnosis of autism, in addition to other children who were in the process of being

diagnosed, and those who were seen by the staff to exhibit traits of autism. A whole school approach had been adopted from the outset, and included a governor and parents. Attendance on the three stages of the programme was determined by role in the school, and learning was used as a basis for whole school change. The overall impact of the AET training and the school's approach meant that, in the words of the SENCO: *'It's like a jigsaw puzzle, and we only had the outside edge and now it feels like all the little bits have been put in and we've got a nice picture now'* (S10).

3.2.6 Impact: children

All the interviewees were able to provide accounts of the positive impact on children with autism of the schools having undertaken AET training. A range of examples was provided, and the overall picture was one that stressed enhanced inclusion for children with autism. Examples were given of children who were able to access the curriculum more effectively, who were given physical space to help with anxiety, were not excluded from classrooms or school, and whose special interests were used to enable them to learn.

The SENCO from one of the secondary schools provided an example of a boy that the previous SENCO and the school thought would be better supported at a special school. However, following the AET training (Level 2), the SENCO worked with the parents of the boy and was able to put in place an IT solution that not only kept the boy in the mainstream secondary school, but also enabled him participate in lessons; Box 1.

Box 1 Inclusion in a secondary school (S1).

There's been a huge impact. When I came to the base in June 2013, there was one young man who was not attending lessons at all but I didn't know why, I didn't have a clue why he wasn't attending lessons, there was no real reason for that and the then SENCO had made up her mind that this child might be better off in a special school but I never really got to the bottom of why that was but since taking over the role and getting to know mum and having some of these and things I've realised that because his autism is quite severe and he won't make eye contact and doesn't communicate verbally all the time, it's usually just one word answers, staff have been quite stand-offish and not wanted to approach him because they've not wanted to upset him so he's got away with not writing anything down and he's got away with it and he goes home to mum and tells her everything about the lesson, he will tell mum absolutely every detail of what he's learnt that day whereas staff, because he wasn't writing anything down, and because he doesn't communicate, the staff thought he didn't understand and that presumption was there. He doesn't communicate therefore he doesn't understand. The SENCO had said 'we'll have to send him to special instead then' and mum's going 'no, he comes home and tells me everything about the lesson'. He understands perfectly, it's just that no-one challenges him. What she said was 'people presume he's stupid so they haven't bothered.' That's the mind-set that they'd got into. So we got him an iPad. On the iPad he's got a communication app and a few other apps that can help him. We got him a task board. Staff can write down what he needs to do. If he feels that he can't communicate that in the lesson, he takes it home, communicates it to mum and mum fills it in and he must understand it to be able to tell mum. The understanding was there we just had to find a different way round him showing us that progress and it was never previously addressed but because of the training I'd had I felt the confidence to address it.
(S1)

The notable element in this example is that the SENCO explained that it was *'because of the [AET] training I'd had I felt the confidence to address the issue',* with such beneficial results. She went on to explain that the important action was approaching the boy's mother and, hence, finding out that, in fact, the boy was engaged with lessons, contrary to the belief of the previous SENCO and other staff.

Behaviour related issues were also identified by interviewees in their examples of the impact of the training on pupils. An example was provided of a primary school pupil who had a history of behaviour issues, which had led to a large number of entries in the school's behaviour log. Following AET training, not only did the behaviour log entries fall, but the child in question, and other autism diagnosed children, had a better experience of school. The interviewee commented, *'with the children I think the impact [of the AET training] is that they're in school, they're happy to be in school, and that they're learning in school'* (S3).

In relation to learning, examples were provided of a school taking advantage of a child's special interests to facilitate learning in a range of areas, and of another child who was provided with his own work station that he could use when working at a table with other children was too much for him. The Assistant Head Teacher of a primary school gave the example of a child in Reception with a diagnosis of autism, and the ways in which the staff support him. The school phased the child's transition from nursery, and the staff *'automatically find out what his interests are, using them for activities and developing that an understanding that if we get our bit right he is much happier, more settled, and more open to instruction and learning'* (S8). The child is also supported at lunch time, being provided with his own quiet space to eat, with the intention of *'gradually introducing him to the dinner hall'.* The interviewee from school 6, a mainstream primary school, explained that a

child whose work station had previously been outside the classroom had now had his work station put inside his classroom, *'he tends to work at his group table most of the time and if he needs his one to one [support worker] or he needs a little bit of time out then he'll go to his work station; but it's decreasing all the time, which is quite nice'* (S6).

3.2.7 Impact: parents/carers

There were a range of responses to questions referring to parent and carer knowledge of school staff training in relation to autism, and to school contact with parents/carers of children with autism. Four of the schools had not specifically told parents/carers that school staff had undertaken AET training. This contrasted with one school which had arranged Level 1 training for parents. More typically, schools maintained a range of communication with parents/carers about their children's needs and autism provision.

Schools used meetings with children's parents/carers, school-home books, parents' evenings, and Family Support Worker input in order to keep parents/carers abreast of the support schools provided for their children, as well as gathering parent/carer advice and knowledge about the children. More specifically, one interviewee explained that her school was developing a clearer picture of parent/carer and children's views:

> *We've been working on parental views and children's views […] so we sent out some information, so for instance we've sent out 'top 10 things you need to know about our child' to parents so that we can get their views on what their children's needs are, their triggers and those sort of things. Those have gone out to parents. Also we've sent out…is it the AET have got a children's views, it's a few pages long, it's a colourful one that's got smiley faces on.*
>
> (S3)

As a result, the school had made changes to practice, particularly following input from the children with autism:

> *Good feedback. The children are being very frank (which is good) and they've been telling us what helps them and what doesn't help them. We've also started doing a RAG timetable which our CAT…essentially it's a child's timetable of the week and then we colour code it to see which are the green bits, which are the bits that are fine; which are the orange bits that they need a bit of help with; and which are the red bits which we really can't stand. And that's been useful as well to get the children's views.*
>
> (S3)

One SENCO made a particular point of bringing the AET training to the attention of parents, and explaining how the school was using the AET's National Standards and Competency Framework:

> *We said to parents 'can you come in because they want to chat to you' and within that I'd shown the parents my folders and said 'this is the folder we've formed, the standards and competencies from the AET, and this is where we've logged the evidence, where we've come from' so parents were able to have a flick through it.*
>
> (S1)

This secondary school (S1) also held autism-specific parent' evenings, and ensured that the parents/carers of the children with autism were updated with developments in the school's support of their children.

The area SENCO (S11) argued that parents/carers of children with autism needed support for themselves from schools: *'we've worked with the parents, one of the things the parents have said is that on a diagnosis they receive nothing, I think they get a CAMHs group appointment'* (S11). In this case, the area SENCO and some of the schools she worked with, had put together a parent information pack. At the time of interview, the AET's own guide, 'Working together with your child's school'[5] was not yet available. The area SENCO's observation that parents/carers often required information about autism and their child suggests that schools might find it useful to include parents/carers in AET training. One school that was interviewed, S10, did, in fact, run a Level 1 AET training for parents/carers:

> *In September (2014) we had the Level 1 for the parents. At school we do a termly parent support group for autism – we call it a coffee morning – and the very first time we ran it not many came but gradually we've built up confidence and trust and they've reached the point where they wanted some training. So we put it on in September and we had 30 parents come. It was great because they were bringing their husbands and grannies – and they came and we did it in September and it was brilliant. They loved it. That was the Level 1.*

> (S10)

This represented the clearest linkage being made by a school between the school's practice, AET training, and parent/carer engagement.

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[5] Bradley, R., Jones, G., Milton, D., & Kerem, M. (2014), 'Working together with your child's school. An AET autism guide for parents and carers' (London, AET).

3.2.8 Embedding the AET Programme

Ensuring that AET training, and the learning that derives from the training, is embedded in a sustainable way requires continued commitment to autism support, appropriate training, and the embedding of good practice. The AET's National Standards[6] and Competency Framework[7] were designed to enable embedding of god autism practice in schools. Interviewees were asked about their familiarity with the National Standards and the Competency Framework, and how they were being used in their school. There was a small range of responses to these questions, four schools were still unaware of the National Standards and the Competency Framework. By contrast, other schools had integrated the National Standards and the Competency Framework into their autism support policies and staff development, and one school had begun planning to do this.

The National Standards and Competency Framework were in place before the end of the 2011-13 roll out, and there was limited awareness of the documents. Nonetheless, the National Standards and the Competency Framework are promoted by the AET hub and trainers, and are seen to be an important element in the AET Programme package. It was surprising, therefore, that four of the interviewees in this small follow-up sample were unaware or unsure about the documents. The schools were one mainstream secondary school, and three mainstream primary schools. In the case of the secondary school, the interviewee (a lead TA) knew that the SENCO had given the National Standards to the senior leadership team, but no action had been taken. This appeared to be part of a more general problem at the school, where senior leadership was unwilling to support provision for children with autism. An example from the primary schools was S6, where the interviewee (the SENCO) said *'we'd not actually looked [at the documents] to be perfectly honest'* (S6). This issue has also emerged via the AET's quality

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[6] http://www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/schools/national-autism-standards/
[7] http://www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/schools/competency-framework/

assurance procedures, and the AET intends to take follow-up measures in order to reinforce messages around the significance of the NS and CF.

One school had not, at the time of interview in November 2014, used the documents, but had begun planning to. This school had undertaken Level 1 training in September 2013, but it was only after the interviewee had done the Level 3 training that the school became aware of the National Standards and the Competency Framework.

By way of contrast, two schools reported well-developed use of the National Standards and the Competency Framework. The Assistant Head Teacher of School 4 (a mainstream primary with a resource base) explained how her school had integrated the Competency Framework into staff development: Box 2.

Box 2 Using the AET Competency Framework in a mainstream primary school with SEND resource base

In terms of the Competency Framework, we use that in terms of our performance management, so all the staff have to go through the process at the beginning of the year; look up what they've learnt in the previous year, tick those things off, and then they focus on one or two of the targets in the competencies. And as a resource base we feed back to one another in terms of presentations. Everybody does a presentation around the thing that they've chosen from the previous year and we feed back to one another in that way. So, it terms of training we are constantly thinking about the children in our setting and how we can develop further.
(S4)

The second school, School 8, has also incorporated the Competency Framework and the National Standards into their daily work. Interestingly, this was, in part, as a result of the external support provided by a Local Authority (LA) autism team. The LA autism team introduced a quality mark system, and to achieve that quality mark schools are expected to use the AET National Standards and Competency Framework.

The area SENCO who was interviewed also provided an example of how external support can assist schools to enhance their autism training and provision. She had used the AET National Standards to help inform a local autism education 'kite mark' for the 17 schools in her area. This had been carried out in conjunction with work with the parents/carers of children with autism, and school staff. The SENCO explained:

> *So we've worked initially with the Autism Education Trust to use their training but to use their also their National Standards and we've developed a kite mark. Baseline standards so that we can support schools so that schools have got an audit of criteria that they should be trying to meet.*

> (S11)

In both these cases (S8 and S11) external support had an important role to play in embedding and sustaining AET training in schools. This was a theme that emerged in other contexts too (see below on Early Years provision), and another school interviewee made the point that she felt that her mainstream primary school would benefit from being part of some form of network:

> *We've done the training. Maybe it would be helpful if at some point you could go back and do an additional bit of not necessarily training but*

almost like networking to discuss maybe what you've done or some things like that; I think that's really helpful when you've … you don't want to go away and forget about it and that keeps you on the ball kind of thing and keeps you going with it if you've maybe got some kind of network or some say you go back and meet those people again and see what's happened since.

(S7)

4. FOLLOW-UP: SCHOOL VISITS

4.1 Introduction

In addition to the follow-up telephone interviews, three mainstream primary schools, and one mainstream primary school with special provision, were visited by CEDAR researchers. Five interviews were carried out with key staff (two Assistant Head and SENCO [SV2; SV3ii], one Deputy Head [SV1], one Lead Practitioner TA [SV4], and one class teacher teaching two children with autism [SV3i]). The interviews were recorded, with informed consent, and the recordings were fully transcribed and analysed. The researchers were also shown around each school and were able to observe the degree to which adjustments had been made for pupils with autism. Field notes were made immediately after each visit. The findings presented here focus on the interview data and the observations made about the school environment in relation to autism provision.

4.2 Interview data

The face-to-face interviews carried out with the five school staff generated data which matched the themes that characterised the telephone interviews (see above). The five interviewees noted that the AET training had been well received by school staff, and that they valued the training for a range of reasons. The importance of external support for autism provision in the schools was addressed, with the interviewees giving a number of examples of

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effective support. The interviewees also gave accounts of the ways in which working with the parents/carers of children with autism enabled the schools to improve their autism provision. Finally, each interviewee was able to give accounts of changes that the school had made to provision following the AET training. This, in turn, provided context for the CEDAR researchers' observations of the school environments.

4.2.1 AET Training and resources

The four schools had each undertaken Level 1 training at whole school level, although not always including non-teaching staff. In addition, further AET training at Level 2 and/or Level 3 was also undertaken by appropriate individual staff members. The training was welcomed and valued. For example, school SV1 had undertaken whole school training at Level 1, and Levels 2 and 3 for the Deputy Head Teacher and the Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) with autism responsibility. The deputy head teacher explained that the school wanted a consistent approach across all staff, and that the AET training provided this. She also welcomed the impact of the training on the staff, and said that their feedback to her had been:

> *Really positive – I think it was done in a really … there was a mixture of the theory so we looked at the four different areas and there was a practical illustration so I think what staff felt was that they could begin to put themselves in the shoes of an autistic child much better really. What also happened was that people were coming and saying I know Billy's not autistic but I really feel that he gets quite anxious about the timetable so shall I do a visual strip for him? Is that okay? Because I think sometimes people are worried and just trying to get people to be confident that we're not saying the child is autistic but if there is anxiety or an issue that we can use those strategies. So I think there's been a much higher level of dialogue with people coming and identifying things and trying out solutions I guess.* (SV1)

The training was, therefore, responsible for greater levels of confidence, reflection, and problem-solving among staff.

The schools also appreciated AET materials, with, for example, the class teacher noting how useful she found the AET resource folder, and how strategies from the folder impacted upon support for a child; Box 3.

Box 3 Using the AET resource folder

Within the folder, with all the different bits and pieces, I was able to use the first and next board that was already prepared in there. I was able to use the pictures that we already have within the class for a visual timetable as a class one. I was then able to use those for an individual basis of first and next so the children knew what was going to happen. There was also almost like a social story in terms of assembly and going to the toilet and home times so that worked perfectly as our staff were able to talk through what was going to happen at each point and what to expect and what that would look like and for one child in particular, the assembly one worked wonders, calmed him as he was able to see what was going to happen next. With the TA with him, she could explain alongside the assembly actually taking place so that worked really well, really well. The first and next board was a gradual thing because they came in at such a young level in terms of development, I didn't really introduce that until a good term or so into the year just so they could appreciate what was then happening and the crux of it really.
(SV3(i))

The SENCO for the school also thought that the availability of the resources folder had a positive impact on staff and their ability to support children. She

noted that, 'I think them [teaching staff] just knowing that they've got this toolkit has helped, and I think I've directed them more to this' (SV3(ii)). The SENCO went on to note how valuable staff found the entire AET training approach: 'it is practical, it's the practical strategies, and that's what teachers want' (SV3(ii)).

4.2.2 External network support

The importance of external networks to help develop sustainability in autism provision was also raised by two of the interviewees. All the interviewees were aware that embedded and sustainable autism provision required change in school policy, staff attitudes, confidence and knowledge, revisited training, and networks between local schools sharing the same goals in relation to autism provision. School SV1 was able to draw upon good local authority autism support, but the deputy head teacher also wanted to build upon links with other schools that she had made through the AET training:

> *I've got a couple of links from the training. There's certainly a local school that's just outside our cluster that have a fairly high number of autistic students so I will visit there and go and have a look at what they're doing and that's quite a nice point of reference for me because in my cluster we've got a very strong network for SENCOs but I lead that and I think it's difficult; that's more me supporting, and there is some collaboration to be fair, but it wouldn't around autism. So that's lovely because I've then got that opportunity to actually encourage some of the schools to do the Level 1, which they have done, and because they are small schools and at this moment in time they might not have an autistic student, they haven't done the Level 2 and 3, but it would mean that I would be able to go in and support them and I know that that's there for them to do if they need to. So that's quite good in spreading the impact of it.*
>
> *(SV1)*

A second interviewee (from school SV4) was also in the process of organising a local schools autism network for TAs and HLTAs, as a result of contacts made through the AET training. The first meeting of this network attracted nine TAs from three schools, and 'most of the issues raised were based around lack of training and support, especially for the TAs in KS2' (KV4).

4.2.3 Working with parents/carers

The four schools exhibited varying degrees of work with parents/carers of children with autism. One school (SV1) had no overall approach to working with parents/carers, and relied on ad hoc contacts. Nonetheless, the school interviewee was aware of this, and said that *'it's certainly something that I would like to develop […] being able to engage the parents, and reassure them'* (SV1). By contrast, school SV2 ran an active parent partnership group, and the Lead Practitioner TA was able to give a good example of how the school was working with the parents of a boy with autism to help his transition to a new home: *'they've recently moved house, so they sent me the details of the house, so I printed it off and said to the boy, "this is your bedroom, this is your lounge". And, on top of that, mum would drive him to the house every night and say this is where we are moving to'* (SV4).

4.2.4 Making changes in school

The interviewees all gave accounts of changes that had been implemented in their schools following AET training. Changes included, the provision of personal work stations, quiet areas, tents, improvements in the design of personalised timetables, the use of visual cues, the use of visual timetables, the introduction of sensory cushions, 'twiddly' pencils, seating arrangement improvements, creating a social club around the specific interest of a boy, use of feelings charts, the development of a virtual tour of school to aid transition, and the use of IPads and apps to help teaching and learning for children with

autism. The accounts of the changes that had been introduced formed the context for the CEDAR researchers' observations of the school environments.

4.3 Observations:

The CEDAR researchers were shown around the schools' sites, and observed all spaces in the schools – reception, corridors, classrooms, quiet areas, 'nurture rooms', play areas. The overall impression was that the schools had made reasonable adjustments in their provision to support the children with autism. Further, the schools saw improving provision as a continuing process, and one that they had only just begun.

The field notes made by one of the CEDAR researchers immediately after visiting SV3 are presented in Box 4.

Box 4 Provision in a mainstream primary school

The classes that had one or two child/ren with autism also had a quiet place designed for that child – e.g. a tent or a desk on its own with a thin curtain hanging in front, blanking it off from the busy classroom. There were also specifically designed quiet work areas in each class for these children where they worked with their TAs. For those who couldn't cope with the lunch-hall, there was a table in a separate quiet place where they could eat.

I also saw use of
- 'First and Then' laminated boards
- Social story-type laminated sheets showing routines e.g. for Assembly, for going home time, for going to the toilet
- Use of *100% Awesome* AET resources
- Use of AET *Tools for Teachers* Behaviour Support Plans and Pupil Profiles and Sensory Profiles

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> - Use of I-pad apps e.g. to support transition – e.g. photos with sound describing and explaining what being in Year 5 was like (used for a boy to support moving up from Y4)
> - Learning resources made specifically to relate to a child's 'special interest' – e.g. a letter book designed around love of dinosaurs; Visual Timetable with each activity displayed as if carried on a wagon of a train

Not all these elements were in place in all of the schools, with, for example, the use of IPads only being found in this school. However, the use of visual timetables, prompts, social-story boards, quiet areas, and tents were common to all schools. Similarly, the researchers noted that all four schools seemed, to them, to present a very 'busy' environment, with all walls covered with pupils' work, pictures, posters, and signage. Usually, it was difficult to find the visual timetables, for example, until they were pointed out. It was this type of issue that led the researchers to conclude that 'reasonable adjustment' was being made in the school environments. Further, in three of the schools, there was specific provision, in the form of a room that was much 'quieter' in its environment. The fourth school, unfortunately, had experienced a recent increase in its roll, and was in need of physical expansion.

In all four schools, there was clear leadership relating to autism provision. Three of the interviewees held senior management (SMT) posts and were able to show how they were leading whole school programmes in relation to supporting children with autism. For example, SV1 provided the researcher with a copy of the school's 'Autism Awareness Action Plan 2014/15'. This identified two responsible lead practitioners (one of whom was the school deputy head teacher and SENCO), key messages, key actions, timescale, staff involved and evaluation. The key messages were based on AET training, and covered 'Understanding Autism', 'Building relationships', 'Enabling

environments', and 'Curriculum and learning'. There was some contrast between the ability of the three SMT autism leads and the fourth lead, who was a lead practitioner TA (SV4). In the latter case, although the interviewee felt that she had the support of the school's head teacher, and that she was able to implement change, she nonetheless felt that it would be useful to be in a position to bring about more whole school change.

4.4 Follow-up schools conclusions

The follow-up interviews with 15 staff members from schools that had undertaken AET Programme training (10 by telephone interview, five in face-to-face interviews) generated evidence of the impact of that training. AET training brought about improvements in staff knowledge understanding, and skills in relation to supporting children with autism. In addition, there was evidence of the continued impact of the training, and the AET materials that suggests that the learning was being embedded into school policy and action. The site visits, carried out at four mainstream primary schools, provided clear evidence that the schools had implemented change arising from AET training and materials. Each school had made reasonable adjustment for children with autism, and had in place leadership and policies supporting autism provision.

Part 2: AET Programme, 2013-15

Introduction

The 2013-15 Programme involved the development of new Early Years (EY) and Post-16 (P-16) training materials for workforces and settings supporting EY and P-16 children and young people with autism. The Programme consisted of three tiers of training which were delivered via four EY and four P-16 training hubs. The 2013-15 Programme also involved the development and roll-out of National Standards and Competency Frameworks for EY and P-16 settings. In addition, guides for parents and carers on working with their children's schools were produced.

Interviews were carried out with the EY and P-16 developers, and four EY and four P-16 hub leads. In addition, a short, e-survey was completed by a sample of Local Authority (LA) leads with responsibility for autism. Finally, three EY were visited by CEDAR researchers, and information was also gathered from two P-16 settings.

5. Developing the materials

5.1 Introduction

The leads from the development teams for the EY and P-16 Programme materials were interviewed in July and June, 2014 respectively. They had previously been interviewed in November, 2013, with findings presented in the interim report (Cullen *et al*, April 2014, 26-28). In late 2013, the two interviewees indicated that they had particular considerations in mind in developing the 2013-15 Programme. These include, the range of settings in both EY and P-16, the varied workforce in EY and P-16 settings, and the age-specific contexts of EY and P-16. The findings reported here cover the development of two of the three tiers of the 2013-15 Programme, the focus

being on Tier 2, 'Good Autism Practice', and Tier 3, 'Leading good autism practice'; Tier 1 having been covered in the interim report. The material presented here relates to common issues and thinking that both development teams faced.

5.2 Developing Tier 2

In developing the Tier 2 materials, the development teams were able to use the Level 2 material from the AET Programme 2011-13 as a starting point. However, there were significant differences between the schools programme and the EY and P-16 Tier 2. The AET National Standards and the Competency Framework had not been available at the first drafting of the AET Programme 2011-13 Level 2, but was for the initial writing of the Tier 2 EY and P-16. The key role in practitioner development and knowledge and autism provision sustainability in settings that the National Standards and Competency Framework have made these documents central to the writing of the Tier 2 material. One of the developers explained that, as before, they consulted widely among their practitioner advisers and the hubs, but also:

> *For Tier 2 and Tier 3, right at the beginning, we had asked our team of practitioners to go through the Competencies and Standards and they came back saying both documents were really good but that they needed contextualising but in terms of content they were very happy with them. And whereas when the Schools [programme was] developed they didn't have the luxury of having those things available to them; we did, so we started with the Competency document and we went through it and we pulled out all the Competencies that we thought would be important to prioritise in the practitioner training and turned those into learning objectives and then used those learning objectives to structure the training.*

> (DA)

Similarly, the second development team stressed the Competency Framework, linking it to the provision of a sufficient range of tools to support autism provision:

> *More importantly they'll get first of all some knowledge about how to work with a child with autism but also some real resources and tools to use when working with someone with autism. I think that's the biggest thing and more of a guide on how to do the competency framework. I think the competency framework is their framework and the links to those tools but it will train them in how to use them and all the elements within it.*

> (DB)

The developers also focused on a range of other key areas in their writing of the Tier 2 materials. These included, incorporating sufficient theory to support the learning of practitioners, a focus on developing the independent learning skills of young children and young adults, and providing a wide range of resources to give trainers a flexible 'tool box' to draw from in their delivery of the programme.

Tier 2 was designed from the outset to be a two day (or equivalent) training event, and this enabled the developers to design training to:

> *set them a task, an activity to go away with and reflect on their setting and then come back on the second training day and feedback on that and reflect on what they learned on the first day and then continue with the rest of it. That will really give them some real activity and a real interaction with the materials and with the training and they will be able*

to embed what they're learning but yes it's about getting knowledge
and skills and resources for them to use when they're using it.

(DB)

There were particular, age-related factors that also needed to be incorporated into the training materials. For example, the EY material had to cover elements of child development, and the issue of how practitioners can raise with parents/carers the issue of delays or difficulties in a young child's development. Different age-related issues arose for the P-16 development team, for example, the need to include material about young adult's personal relationships, and the ways in which autism could impact upon them.

5.3 Developing Tier 3

Tier 3 was envisaged by the development teams as being *'all about developing organisational practice'* (DA). The focus was on how managers could support practitioners to improve outcomes for children. In addition, there were age-specific concerns such as, for example, the new SEN code of practice for FE colleges. Overall, both development teams were clear that Tier 3 had a pronounced management focus:

When we wrote it [we felt] that actually the bulk of that training, if you
think about a specific focus, we felt should be about curriculum and
learning because they will be the people who will have the power and
position to put the architecture for an effective learning programme in
place.

We think they need some real understanding of what autism is and the
impact that it has and they need to know that the staff that work with
them need specific training but they don't need the root and branch

detail around how you actually go about doing it, just what you actually
need to put in place to make it happen.

(DA)

A balance had to be struck between providing managers with some of the
necessary background to autism, with the need to enable 'organisational
practice and development' management (DA). Once again, the AET National
Standards and Competency Framework played a central role in the
development of the materials. The hoped-for learning outcomes for managers
attending Tier 3 training can be summed up as:

- To know what autism is, and to understand the implications for
  training and organisation.
- How is autism identified, support for learners with autism
  prioritised, and how are the right partnerships made to support
  provision.
- Having a practical understanding of the steps needed to
  manage provision for autism.

6. Early Years and Post-16 Training Hubs

6.1 Introduction

Following on from the successful roll out of the AET Programme 2011-13, the
process of deepening the AET Programme offer by including training for the
Early Years and Post-16 workforces involved a widening of the training hubs
structure. The National Autistic Society (NAS), Leicestershire County Council,
Birmingham City Council, and North Yorkshire County Council – successfully
bid to act as the Early Years (EY) training hubs. Four hubs – Ambitious about
Autism, Birmingham City Council, NORSACA and Nottinghamshire County

Council, and Kent Association of Further Education Colleges (KAFEC) – were successful in competing for the role of being Post-16 (P16) hubs. At the beginning of September, 2014, KAFEC's role as administrator for the hub was taken by Sarah Hendrickx Associates, which had previously only been providing the AET training.

For this final report, semi-structured telephone interviews were undertaken with lead representatives from each hub, between 1st December 2014 and 12th January 2015. The interviews were recorded, with permission, and fully transcribed for analysis. The purpose of the interviews was to enable the hub leads to reflect on the roll out of the AET Programme 2013-15. The interviews focused on the following areas:

- The delivery, and reception, of the three tiers of the Programme
- The inclusion of the relevant National Standards and Competency Framework into delivery
- Issues relating to costs and funding.

There were some similarities between the EY and P-16 versions of the AET 2013-15 Programme, but there were also important differences experienced by the hubs in relation to the two. The findings are, therefore, presented here under EY and P-16 headings.

6.2. Early Years (EY)

6.2.1 Delivery and reception of the EY Programme

6.2.1.1. Tier 1

The hubs had a common experience of roll out at the time of interview (December 2014-January 2015) in relation to the three Tiers of the Programme. The four hub leads all explained that, for Tier 1, they had

experienced a slow start, followed by a rapid rise in take-up, enabling the hubs to meet their Tier 1 target. At the start of the roll-out, hubs had engaged in promotional work and planning. A key, early challenge that the hubs experienced arose in relation to the very wide range of EY settings that the Programme had to be marketed to. For example, nurseries in school settings, free-standing maintained and private nurseries, child-minders, children's centres, and voluntary groups. For one of the hubs, the large majority of EY settings were private providers – child-minders and nurseries – and this made the job of marketing the Programme a longer task. In addition, it was noticed by two of the hub leads that there was some tendency for schools with nurseries to opt for the AET schools programme, Level 1, for nursery staff as well as school staff. For example, one lead said:

> *I think that makes good sense for a school because you're doing it as a whole school and I can see why they've done that. But then I would say, and I'm promoting the benefits of the Early Years Programme, that for the later stages where it is Early Years specific for the Early Years practitioners, and I do passionately believe we've got some really good materials there, […] there's some really good stuff there.*

(H5)

This lead gave 'three or four schools' as having taken the schools programme, their nursery staff included, in the previous school term.

Despite a slow start, all hub leads reported that the demand for Tier 1 had increased quickly and they were all pleased at the way in which Tier 1 was being taken up by EY settings. A wide variety of settings, and practitioners, were taking Tier 1. One hub lead summarised the success of Tier 1 take-up:

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With the Early Years we had a very good take up for the Tier 1. So we're heading to about a thousand if not more. I haven't got accurate numbers but in terms of delegates trained. Not just within our area but within some of the neighbouring local authorities as well. And to SEND child minders, PVI's and maintained nurseries as well to area SENCO networks. So across the board.

(H4)

In another hub area:

All of the early years practitioners, all the early years SENCOs and setting managers have received Making Sense of Autism [Tier 1] training through the SENCO network and I think that hits about 80% of all early years settings because obviously not all settings attend the SENCO setting (most do) so we've targeted 80% of the SENCOs.

(H6)

The success of the Tier 1 roll-out was matched, in the opinion of the hub leads, by its reception by Early Years practitioners. Not only were the EY materials valued, but so was the delivery, and the opportunities that training gave for networking:

And it is very well received […] the impact on people is huge and it's raising that autism discussion, putting people in contact with each other, giving people links to websites, to organisations, to other people, knowing what's going on in the region.

(H5)

Three of the hub leads mentioned that they felt that the Tier 1 materials were more completely formed than the schools Level 1 materials had been at first, and assumed that the EY materials had benefited from the schools Programme development and roll-out. As interviewee H5 noted, *'they [Tier 1] are more focused and more specific in a way that the schools weren't. That has given us a lot of confidence and we all want to get out there with them'*.

6.2.1.2. Tier 2

Prior to roll-out, there had been some concerns that the two-day format of the Tier 2 course might cause difficulties. However, this was not an issue raised by the EY hub leads. Nonetheless, as with Tier 1, they explained that take-up had been slow at first, but had either picked-up or was expected to do so. This had been the case with the 2011-13 Programme for schools, but it was not entirely clear that there would be the same type of progression for the EY settings. The early difficulties were related, as for Tier 1, to the wide range of settings, and the extra demands that put on marketing. Three of the EY hub leads said that it was important to operate through Local Authorities (LAs), who were a key conduit for marketing the course to the range of settings. Within LAs, service providers such as autism outreach services, and EY advisory teams enabled a greater reach for the Tier 2 offer.

Two of the hub leads gave detailed accounts of how their hubs had adopted a strategic approach to delivery across their area. For example, one lead explained:

> *We're now [December 2014] in the process that we've set up targeted tier 2 courses so the SENCOs [who had taken Tier 1] gave us information on the key worker for children and young people with autism so we've got two targeted courses which should support 40 practitioners in the spring term to go to the Tier 2, so they're the key*

workers working directly with those children known to the local
authority in the early years that have a diagnosis of autism so we
should have hopefully provided Tier 2 training to all key workers of
children with autism in the local authority by the end of the spring term.

(H6)

In a similar fashion, another hub lead went through an LA to market Tier 1, which, in turn, enabled the recruitment of delegates for the pilots of both Tier 2 and Tier 3. With that success, the hub was able to return to the LA and recruit further delegates to Tiers 2 and 3:

We did a sort of SEN market place and sold the programme and that's
how we got a food hold into [the LA] so we picked up a lot of their
private nursery and day provision and got a lot of Tier 1s. And from
that group of people got quite a number for our pilot Tier 2 and Tier 3 in
the summer. So then we went back to the Early Years Advisory Team
in [the LA] and were trying to persuade them to take it all on board and
they actually commissioned us to do quite a lot of training, so a few
Tier 2s and a few Tier 3s.

(H5)

The reception of Tier 2 training was reported as being very good by all the hub leads. It was seen to fulfil a clear need in terms of EY staff knowledge, understanding and training, although there were some concerns associated with marketing to the wide variety of EY settings, and funding issues that they might face. One hub lead noted:

I think that the tier 2 they love because it's just so practical. Main
activities in each of the sections and it really gives them the chance to

select on what they are doing in their own setting. And I do think that the level of autism understanding is low in private nurseries and you know in fact across most nurseries really. And I think there's a lot of information that's really helpful and very necessary but that it's put across in a way that's accessible to them and I think they're going away feeling that it's filled a lot of gaps. And it's going to help them to begin to identify those differences earlier on and to put the support in place.

(H4)

This view was echoed by another hub lead, who said: *'When you are delivering the Making Sense of Autism to early years practitioners you can see that they are really benefiting from that training,'* (H6).

6.2.1.3. Tier 3

At the time of the interviews (December 2014-January 2015), very few Tier 3 courses had been delivered by the hubs. Hub 7 reported only one Tier 3 course, Hub 4, two Tier 3 courses, Hub 5 two Tier 3 pilots, and Hub 6, had done *'a small number'*, but had booked in more for the Spring Term, 2015. Given the staggered roll-out of the Tiers, and the structure of the Programme, this was expected. Some other issues were, however, raised by hub leads. For example, one lead noted that school-based SENCOs (with responsibility for attached nurseries) may well have been attending the Level 3 training for schools: *'we have more schools sending their SENCOs to Level 3 which is more established,'* (H7).

The Tier 3 training had been delivered was well received and regarded as very successful by hub leads. One lead explained:

We've run two Tier 3 courses which have been very successful and which we've managed to get managers from the settings in and they've been keen and interested in going back and getting the Actions Plans in place and beginning to drive through the change. Obviously most of those I would say have been local authorities nurseries it is more difficult when they've then gone back to private settings.

(H4)

The comment here about the differing settings was another example of the variety of EY settings that training hubs work with.

6.3.1 AET National Standards and Competency Framework (EY)

The hub leads appreciated the role of the AET National Standards (NS) and Competency Framework (CF) in supporting and embedding good autism provision. There was some slight variation in the stresses laid on the NS and CF, but both were seen to be fully embedded in the delivery plans of the hubs.

One hub lead made a distinction between Tier 2 and Tier 3 training in relation to the NS and CF: *'I think in Tier 3 the Standards fit in better in a way because you're looking at the whole provision. The Standards are more embedded in Tier 3 than the Competencies are in Tier 2 by the very nature of what you're delivering,'* (H5). This hub lead also felt that *'people were picking them [NS and CF] up slowly'* as that hub team found difficulties in fully referencing them during the delivery of Tier 2, in particular.

The NS and CF were also being used outside the training, with one hub developing a peer-mentoring system for child-minders, where AET trained mentors were given additional NS and CF support to better enable them to

support their co-workers. The NS and CF were also a key part of the delivery of Hub 7:

> *Part of our strategy embedded within our delivery plan to the local authority utilising the National Standards and the Competencies both in the Schools and in the Early Years and trying to embed those in as empowerment principals and the delivery plan is set for the next 18 months and certainly some of the key drivers of that is the embedding in these Early Years settings the National Standards and Competencies which we will include onto our website as well as the information about training.*
>
> (H7)

The fact that the documents were geared specifically to EY provision was valued, with Hub Lead 4 explaining that the linkages to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) were particularly welcomed, and that the NS were important for planning provision:

> *Now they [EY settings] have got their own [National Standards] they are absolutely delighted with all the links to EYFS and so on. So you know I think goes to the value of that as a document and really have felt it has made a difference. And of course being in all the settings that we're working in, in the nursery settings, we use those standards to reach an agreement at the beginning of each year about the strategic capacity of the settings.*
>
> (H4)

6.4.1 Costs and funding (EY)

There were a variety of views about future pricing, costs, and funding, expressed by the hubs. There was some concern, in particular, that the cost of the two day Tier 2 training might prove prohibitive for some EY settings, particularly for child minders and some nurseries. However, the hub leads had begun to plan to meet these type of issues, and planning was being undertaken in terms of cross-subsidisation and sliding scale charging, dependent on setting type.

Hub lead 5 argued that while the Tier 2 training was *'fantastic'* for staff development, there might well prove to be a problem in relation to cost:

> *It [Tier 2] is of great benefit to practitioners but you've got to actually get them on that course and people to buy into. And I know £190 doesn't sound too much and we were paying £400 a day for courses not so long ago but up here there's no spare cash and it's been really really difficult to get them. That's why [LA name] are creating a pot of money to actually invest in the autism training.*

> (H5)

The reference to the role of the LA in providing funding raises the issue of hubs adopting an LA strategy that seeks to take advantage of LA financial resources (austerity notwithstanding) and local LA networks.

Cross-subsidisation and a sliding scale of charges was also seen to be an answer to cost questions faced by settings. An example was given by hub lead H4, who explained that:

We have offered a sliding scale of charges. Now what we've done, we've offered I think the Tier 2 course at something like £25.00 for the community playgroup, another cost for children's centres and private nurseries and top cost to local authority maintained nurseries. We are subsidising that with the funding we've had this year from AET. So I think when they're getting the opportunity some of these like [nurseries] based in a church hall and when they're getting this opportunity for two days of training at this kind of cost it's a no-brainer really I think isn't it? Whether the situation will change when we re-consider that. We may decide to continue to do this, I don't know […]. So we are offering that because I think we wanted to try to ensure we targeted as wider group as we could.

(H4)

Cross-subsidisation was being planned for by another hub, Hub 7, which intended to charge at Tier 1 at a level which would enable a subsidy for Tier 2 training. Further, the hub was also considering a sliding scale of charges, with, for example, schools being charged more than child minders.

Planning for the future had begun, and at least one hub intended to build on existing network arrangements to support the continued delivery of the training:

Post the AET funding, I think what will happen is that we will develop a contract so that [LA name] will also deliver their own [AET] Tier 2 and Tier 3, so we're in the process of providing Train the Trainer on those levels now in readiness for April for workers within the [LA outreach team] and likewise there will be six of our staff who will be trained and we're delivering that within [county] and we're in the process of training

our staff to deliver the Tier 2 and the Tier 3 through shadowing [the LA
outreach team] delivering it.

(H6)

In addition, another level of delivery has also begun to be developed – the model of sub-contracting to local LAs. The AET has produced guidelines for hubs adopting this model of delivery.

6.6. Post-16 (P-16)

6.6.1 Delivery and reception of the P-16 Programme

6.6.1.1. P-16 Tier 1

The hub leads reported very positively on the delivery and reception of the Tier 1 training. The hubs met their targets quickly, were able to deliver to a very wide range of P-16 settings, and the training was well received. For example:

> *Well we started delivering AET P16 Tier 1 in January earlier this year*
> *[2014] and since then we've managed to deliver to a wide range of*
> *settings. It's just over eight hundred now [1st December 2014] that*
> *we've delivered it to. So that's gone really, really well. The setting*
> *ranges from P16 colleges. We've been to further education colleges.*
> *We've been to social enterprises offering work placements to*
> *individuals. We've been to youth offending teams. I'm trying to think of*
> *other settings. I've been to the Asian group in [city]. Yeah we've*
> *delivered to a wide range of people. There's been lots of interest.*
> *We've had really positive feedback about the Tier 1 training.*

(H1)

Another hub lead noted that *'we are getting lots of enquiries for the Tier 1 training'* (H3), and that 'word of mouth' had a big part to play in the rapidly increasing demand for the training, along with the fact that it was free at the point of delivery. The extent to which Tier 1 targets were exceeded was indicated by one hub lead, who explained, *'we've well exceeded our Tier 1 target, I think we've done about 700 [delegates] rather than 250'* (H2). There was some feeling that the numbers trained in hub 8 had been a little slower than expected, but that they *'were beginning to snowball now [December 2014]',* (H8), and, again, targets would be exceeded.

The marketing of Tier 1 P-16 had to address a very wide range of settings. Hub leads explained that key targets for Tier 1 marketing were LAs, for example, autism outreach teams, Further Education (FE) colleges, private and social enterprises offering work experience and training for young people, and community groups. The range of potential settings also meant that word of mouth was important, as one hub leader explained:

> *Some of it's come through word of mouth because we've delivered in college settings. Members of the audience particularly for the [community] group. Members of the audience approached us later asking whether we'd be prepared to go to their setting to deliver the post 16. So that went really well. For the social enterprise groups it was the [name] and [name] in the city, and, again, it was word of mouth. […] We've also had people from the local authority Asperger team coming on Tier 1 and they've done Tier 2 as well. They really liked it. We've had quite a few people from social care settings who support individuals with independent skills in the community. Again the feedback from them has been very, very positive.*

The overall picture of Tier 1 P-16 delivery and its reception, then, was very positive.

6.6.1.2. P-16 Tier 2

The Tier 2 pilots (and the Tier 3 pilots) caused some difficulties, which were almost entirely due to their timing. Unfortunately, the pilots had to take place during the summer holiday period for FE colleges, and other training-based settings. However, this was only the case for the pilot phase of the Programme, and the roll-out itself began in conjunction with the new academic year in September 2014. Beyond this issue, the hub leads reported that take-up of Tier 2 was slow, and that there were some concerns about this. Hub leads identified a number of problems, including the difficulty of *'getting people to commit to bookings for Tier 2'* (H1), identifying the relevant member of staff in FE colleges to approach for bookings (H2), the cost of Tier 2 training (H1), and timing constraints for staff in FE colleges (H8).

Although there had been some early concerns that the fact that Tier 2 training was a two day event would put people off the training. However, this was not felt to be a factor, as one hub lead commented, *'if they appreciate that there's a level of depth that needs to be gone into then they won't question it [two days]'* (H3).

Working with, and marketing AET training to FE colleges brought challenges in relation to identifying the 'right' managers to approach, and in terms of time constraints for FE college staff. All the hub leads noted that FE colleges were complex organisations, often multi-site, employing large numbers of sessional workers, where budgets were often held by different managers to those responsible for CPD or departmental training. Not only did this bring difficulties in identifying the key staff member to approach about the training offer, but diffuse management structures meant that ensuring Senior Management Team (SMT) buy-in was also more problematic. These issues were summed up by hub lead 2:

I think one of the problems in terms of the administration, and again this is different to the school system, is that the people that are picking this up to put it to the colleges are a variety of people. Sometimes it's student services, sometimes it's HR, sometimes it's staff development. And communication typically across FE is terrible. So one department doesn't naturally talk to the other. That's a bit of a problem so we've kind of been aware that people have booked a course and it's been booked for two or three months but actually the word has only gone out to the staff maybe three days before the course was due. And I know this is the case because I work in some of these colleges doing different projects and I've said to the staff 'I'm coming to deliver some training to you' and they're saying 'We don't know anything about this' and then all of a sudden an email will pop up. And it's very difficult to determine as the trainer or as the organisation what to do about that. Is it our place to go 'Well this is appalling'?

(H2)

Another hub lead gave a similar account of working with the sector, and noted that it was important to convince the SMT in FE colleges that all Tiers were relevant: *'I think if you've got a relatively senior manager or autism champion that's recognising that then they'll make their case,'* (H3).

Hub lead H1 made the point that budget-holders and staff involved with training and CPD in FE colleges were not necessarily the same people, which could complicate the marketing of the AET training.

The final point that emerged in relation to marketing and delivering to FE colleges was that the combination of sessional staff (largely paid on the basis

of contact hours), and FE college timetables, meant that time for training was limited:

There are set times each year for whole day staff training events and they tend to be …many colleges have a whole week at the end of the summer terms some have time at the beginning of the autumn term sort of right at the end of August after bank holiday and just before enrolment starts. Some have…that's quite a common one… end of Christmas term beginning of spring term early January before the students come in. So there are quite set dates and some colleges are just finding it difficult to find any other times from that. (H3)

6.6.1.3. P-16 Tier 3

No P-16 Tier 3 training had been delivered at the time of the interviews (December 2014-January 2015), although training had been booked for later in the January term. Nonetheless, the hub leads made a small number of points in relation to the Tier 3 training, and these are presented here.

Two of the hub leads wondered if the Tier 3 training, designed for those who managed and led staff delivering autism support, might not be a good path into settings like FE colleges. Both of these cited the example of one of the other training hubs, which, they said was planning to offer Tier 3 first to certain settings. Hub lead 2 explained some of the challenges in marketing the training to colleges, and noted that sometimes gaining access to non-management staff was not sufficient because:

It's just somebody saying we've got some autism training running – sign up if you want to. But it isn't coming from the senior managers, it's not coming from the principals. And that's where it needs to come

*from. I know that [AET hub] are planning to try and hit the Tier 3 first to
get the managers on board and then get them, because I think
otherwise if you try and do it the other way round … But essentially that
is probably the way forward is to convince the managers that they need
to do this and then for them to implement it.*

(H2)

The same point was also made by hub lead H3, who suggested, in addition,
that there might be a case for developing a one-day course based on the AET
National Standards that was aimed specifically at SMTs. Familiarity with the
National Standards would then, she argued, act as a spur for managers to
buy AET training for setting staff.

The diversity of P-16 settings could, hub lead H3 argued, impact upon the
scope for marketing Tier 3, with smaller providers not necessarily having a
large numbers of staff, nor a clear management structure. H3 also said that
perhaps there could be a bigger effort by the AET to advertise the AET
Programme offer nationally. In particular, she pointed to Initial Teacher
Training (ITT) providers as a sector that might respond to a national marketing
drive by the AET. Adopting a Tier 3 first strategy for marketing the Programme
to FE colleges might be seen to have parallels with an LA strategy for EY
marketing.

6.6.1.4 AET National Standards and Competency Framework (P-16)

The hub leads all saw the AET National Standards (NS) and Competency
Framework (CF) as being an important part of the AET Programme and a
vehicle to ensure embedding and sustainability of learning from the training.
One example of the use of the NS and CF, and the way it is incorporated into
the training was given by one of the hub leads:

At the beginning of the training we talk about the standards and the competency framework in Tier1 and people are interested in that. In Tier 2 of course that is an opportunity throughout the course to reflect of those standards and make sure we point them out and they are reflected on during the course and of course people to take note of where they feel their strengths are and make notes for any areas they feel they are going to develop, where they need to develop when they're finished with the course.

(H1)

Another hub lead said that the NS and CF were being highlighted, but for the learning to be embedded successfully in settings it was important that SMTs took a lead:

I don't think anybody else really can embed it unless it's coming from the top because you've got to allow the time for the staff to be reflecting or completing the Competencies and perhaps even going through them during supervision or whatever they have.

(H2)

6.6.2 Costs and funding (P-16)

Costs and funding issues appeared to be less of a concern for P-16 hub leads than it had been for the EY hub leads. Nonetheless, some concerns were expressed. However, there was some concern that the cost of a two day course (including the cost of cover for staff on the course) might be off-putting. One hub lead gave a specific example of a FE college which had *'loved'* Tier 1, and had wanted to take Tier 2, but:

They would like Tier 2 but they haven't got money, they haven't got the funding. They are looking at taking us up on a Tier 2 at some point but it would be for a limited number of their staff. The cost they said and the fact that it is a two day for them could be a bit of a logistical challenge for them. Unless practitioners choose to access that independently.

(H1)

This hub lead gave another example, when a FE staff member (from a different college) who had taken the Tier 1 training, and wanted to take Tier 2: *'she really values the course and she said it's wonderful. But again in her own setting money is a big problem she had to really beg her seniors to provide the funding for her alone to come on Tiers 2 and 3 and that's at half price,'* (H1). This hub lead was concerned that once the hub was unable to subsidise the training with AET funding, then there would be real pressure on numbers applying for Tier 2 and 3 training. The hub lead believed that if accreditation was available to settings that took all three levels of training, then FE colleges, in particular, would be more willing to fund staff to attend the training.

6.6.3 Overall views re the P-16 training

The hub leads were optimistic in relation to the future of AET training for P-16. They felt that it was high quality, well-regarded training that met a need for staff training at P-16 level. The three tiers of the Programme were felt to provide a *'wrap-around'* (H8) provision, as, indeed, was the wider EY to P-16, and school age AET training. There was a good deal of praise for the training materials, the approach, and the NS and CF. For example, one hub lead commented: *'I think it's brilliant. I think the resources, there's such a lot of thought gone into it. I think the whole thing – I think it's a beautiful thing. It's really well put together,'* (H1).

Future prospects for the Programme were considered to be good, although there was some acknowledgement that the wider context (characterised by continued government austerity) might impact on it. For example, one hub lead summed up her sense of the future:

In terms of the future I think there's a huge amount of possibilities; I think we're very excited about where we can go and what we do with all of this, very excited but I can think it will be a slow ride. I think we'll be looking at maybe three or four years before this is perhaps a real genuinely sustainable project maybe. (H2)

7. EARLY YEARS SETTINGS VISITS

7.1 Introduction

In December 2014 and January 2015, CEDAR researchers visited three Early Years settings – nurseries - that had undertaken AET Programme training. The three nurseries exhibited noticeable differences in their rolls, the issues they faced, and the scale of the autism needs among their children. Two of the nurseries (EYV1 and EYV2) were mainstream nurseries, one having an autism resource base. Both of these nurseries were located in cities. The third nursery (EYV3/4) was a charity supported funded by staff at a major employer in a rural area. Four key staff were interviewed, being three nursery school head teachers (EYV1, EYV2, and EYV3), and one SENCO (EYV4). The interviews were recorded, with informed consent, and the recordings were fully transcribed and analysed. The researchers were also shown around each nursery and were able to observe the degree to which adjustments had been made for children with autism. Field notes were made immediately after each visit, and some relevant documentation was collected, for example, implementation plans and staff CPD questionnaires in relation to autism training. The findings presented here focus on the interview data and the

observations made about the nursery environments in relation to autism provision.

7.2 Interview data

The interview data presented here focuses on views of the AET training, and the impact of the training at individual, whole setting, and individual child level. The three nurseries represented different levels of autism provision: one nursery, with a resource base had a relatively long engagement with AET training, dating back before the introduction of the EY Programme. The second nursery had begun to engage with the AET training through the EY programme, and had made major changes to its provision; while the third nursery had only recently begun to extend its autism provision, and, with a very limited budget, was having difficulty in adding to that provision.

7.2.1 AET Training

Each nursery had, at the time of the visits, undertaken different degrees of AET training. Nursery EYV1 had been involved with the AET Programme from early on, and had taken part in the AET Programme 2011-13, undertaking the school Level 1. From the 2013-15 Programme, all the nursery staff, some parents and the nursery's governors had taken Tier 1 training, and some of the staff had taken Tier 2 training. The nursery planned to have all staff undertake Tier 2, and the head teacher and SENCO to take Tier 3. All the staff from nursery EYV2 had undertaken the EY Tier 1 training, four staff had also undertaken Tier 2, and the nursery's SENCO had done all three Tiers of the EY Programme. By contrast, the third nursery, EYV3/4, had only completed Tier 1 for all staff, but they had also applied for three members of staff to take Tier 2, and the SENCO to take Tier 3 as well.

The AET EY training was highly valued by all the interviewees' irrespective of each nursery's prior knowledge of autism and autism provision. For EYV2 and

EYV3/4, the immediate impetus behind their taking up AET training was the knowledge that the nurseries were going to be providing for children with autism. The head teacher and SENCO from nursery EYV3/4 found out about the AET Programme at a nursery leadership course, and knowing the nursery had two children with autism joining the nursery, the staff were very keen to undertake the training, the SENCO saying:

It was just the Tier 1 training and just everything about it like some of the girls [staff members] weren't aware that you can be hypersensitive like lights, noises that could really upset her [child with autism]. So it was just basic things like that so you could watch them all. And what made me really happy was everybody's interested in it now and they'd all like to go on and do more courses, really liked it.

(EYV3)

The head teacher, commented, *'It was fantastic and it opened our eyes to things that can help us. We were taught tactics to use that can help us with these children which we weren't aware of, tactics that we can actually use with all the children,'* (EYV4). Similarly, the staff from nursery EYV2 who attended the Tier 2 training were very positive about the delivery and the content of that training:

The staff that went on the training, it was only last week they went on the second lot of training, and they've come back and said 'I was exhausted. It was intense'. There was a lot of it but they felt like they'd learnt a lot over the 2 days and they said yes we can see how it all fits in. So I think the actual delivery of the training seems to be successful.

(EYV2)

Overall, the AET training was seen to have an impact on staff understanding of autism, and on their approach to supporting children with autism. Interviewee EYV2 noted that the training '*gave a greater understanding to staff*', and that 'their knowledge and understanding and awareness [improved], and there was a lot of *"I'll have to change the way I do …" from the staff*' (EYV2). The head teacher from nursery EYV2 also gave a similar account of the value and impact of the training on staff:

> *The reaction of the staff - there's a great deal of enthusiasm and 'Oh that's why … I never thought of that. Well we won't ever do that again'. Pennies dropping. And they are very good at telling the other staff 'we're doing this because….' It's not just because it's change or because it's the fashion; it's because this, this and this.*
>
> (EYV2)

> *And I think the second part of the training [Tier 2] gave more of the why we're doing it because the two staff that came back last week were very much like 'I really understand now why …' and 'that's very confusing if we do that' and 'how can we bring those things in and still accommodate for the majority?' So there's a lot of thought provoking going on.*
>
> (EYV2)

7.2.2. National Standards and Competency Framework

The three nurseries represented different levels of familiarity and use of the AET National Standards (NS) and Competency Framework (CF), reflecting the length of time that they had been engaged with the AET Programme.

In the case of EYV3/4, neither the head teacher nor the SENCO knew of the NS or the CF, even though both had, along with their staff, undertaken Tier 1 training. The nursery was very aware of the lack of knowledge that they had about autism and autism support, and were very keen to access as much reliable information as possible. By contrast, EYV1 had, prior to the publication of the EY NS and CF used the schools Programme NS and CF in their nursery. The head teacher explained how valuable they had been as a tool to bring about change across the entire setting – Box 5.

Box 5: Using the National Standards

The standards [...] we used them as an audit so that we could say where we were, what we thought we needed to do next and what were our main priorities really, where we needed to put in staff training and what we needed to develop. They were absolutely invaluable to us because we had nothing to compare ourselves to and we were really working in the dark and it was like I said it was a passion really rather than doing things from a true knowledge base although we did have some experience and we'd obviously got people who were trained. But the standards were just amazing for us and we audited not just the resource base but the entire school. [...]During that first year what we also did was use the standards to set performance management objectives for the staff who were then based in the resource base. That gave a very clear indication of where we needed to go as a school but also for those individual staff what they needed to do.

(EYV1)

The publication of the CF was also seized upon by the nursery to support staff development in terms of autism support: Box 6.

Box 6: Using the Competencies Framework

> *We realised that the competencies had to be personal and individual and every member of staff had a copy of the competencies and they did their own audit on themselves. When they'd completed that they then brought them all back to me and I went through the whole lot to have a look at any issues that might have arisen and there were two that stood out from all the rest where everybody had said that they felt they needed a little bit more support. So that then became our focus for our school development as a whole the following year.*
>
> EYV1

The third nursery, EYV2, had plans to integrate the NS and CF into its work, with the SENCO, who had undertaken al Tiers of the training, preparing this, following a number of changes that she had led in relation to autism provision in the nursery.

7.2.3. Making changes in the nurseries

All the interviewees from the three nurseries gave accounts of how the AET training and resources had impacted upon autism support. Changes ranged from the use of visual timetables to major changes in a nursery environment. The SENCO, EYV3, explained how in supporting a little boy who had problems with transition, the nursery had adopted techniques learnt through the AET training:

> *We have a visual timetable and we use that and then we have a small one; first we do this then this. So we follow that like the bible and that works really well. It's not 100% effective but it's a good support. And*

we give him time, we give instructions, wait 10 seconds, simplify them, keep them onto model words, and make sure we've got eye contact.

(EYV3)

This nursery (funded by the parents) had a very restricted budget, but had, nonetheless, made some changes to the physical environment of the school, with had introduced 'calming areas' in each room, visual timetables, switched off background music, and reduced the 'business' of displays in the rooms.

The most significant changes in environment to result from the AET training came in nursery EYV2. A maintained nursery, the initial AET training was undertaken shortly before the nursery was due for re-decoration. As a result of the learning at the AET training, the nursery opted for a change in the colour schemes throughout the school, and the creation of a nurture room. The head teacher explained:

> *We've toned down on colours, we've changed the way we do displays, we've redecorated and remodelled a large part of the nursery with different equipment, different furniture, and it's part of the … it's blended well into we wanted the children to become more independent. We're always looking for different ways and it sort of fitted in nicely with that as well. So everything is sort of more natural, more muted. Every cohort is different but last year's cohort was very boisterous all year, really, really boisterous, and we'd got bright displays, dangly things everywhere. This year, because we had the modelling done in the summer, these children have come into this environment and it seems a lot calmer. Now that's anecdotal and we don't know because obviously it's a different group of children but the staff are convinced that it's got something to do with it.*

EYV2

In addition, the nursery had converted a room used as a toy library (where the toys had been placed in a variety of boxes and crates) into a quiet, calm, nurture room with lighting control. This was used for small group work, and for individual children to use if they needed to.

7.2.4. External support

All the interviewees raised the issue of external support for their autism education. In the case of EYV1 and EYV2, both nurseries were able to draw upon LA input, in the shape of LA Community Autism Teams (CAT), SENCO networks, or parent networks. For example, EYV1 takes part in a local network of nursery school head teachers, and a network for staff involved in resource base provision. The head teacher gave an account of the type of learning that characterised the resource base network:

> *The CAT team also run resource based network meetings for when it's just for children with autism, we meet regularly. Usually at some point during both meetings somebody does a little summary really of what they do in their resource base, which is lovely to find out what other people are doing but also to build on each other's experience and expertise.*

> (EYV1)

This type of support was highly valued by both EYV1 and EYV2, both city-based and maintained nurseries. However, the third nursery – a rural and charity-funded nursery – did not have access to such support, with LA support being minimal, and little other network support available. The SENCO and the head teacher from the nursery both talked about how they felt the lack of such support, and how they would like to have access to a support network where

they could share experiences and learning. For this nursery, the AET Programme had been a very welcome opportunity, and one that they intended to pursue further, but it was still felt that it would be helpful to have a long-term link into a relevant local network.

7.3 Observations

The CEDAR researchers were shown around the nursery sites, and observed all the spaces in them – reception, corridors, classrooms, quiet areas, and 'nurture rooms', play areas. The overall impression was that each nursery had made a range of changes to their physical environments. The degree to which those changes had been made reflected the stage of the nurseries' journey in terms of autism provision, and funding available to each nursery. The nurseries also planned to make continuing, additional changes to boost autism provision further.

The field notes made by one of the CEDAR researchers immediately after visiting nursery school, EVY2 are presented in Box 7.

Box 7: Provision in a mainstream nursery school (EYV2)

Following AET Tier 1 training, the nursery school began a complete redecorating of its premises. It replaced all the primary colours on walls and doors, and around classroom displays, with muted, neutral colours. In addition, the former toy library (described by the member of staff as 'very messy') was turned into the nursery's nurture room – this is an uncluttered, neutrally painted room with dark blinds that can be pulled. In addition, the lighting has been changed, and a light ceiling has been added which enables staff to change the ceiling colours. A little girl with autism liked to lie

on cushions in the room watching the ceiling colours change. Around the school in general, strip lights had been replaced by recessed ceiling lights.

The head teacher regarded these extensive changes to the physical environment as being part of a continuing programme of making the school environment more suitable for children with autism. She also noted that the changes seemed, in her and her staff's view, to have had a calming effect on all children in the nursery.

The significant changes in EYV2 had been enabled by routine redecoration funding, an opportunity that was not available for nursery EYV3/4. Nonetheless, the CEDAR researcher was able to see changes that had been made; Box 8.

Box 8 Provision in a private (charity-funded) nursery (EVY3/4)

As a result of learning from the AET Tier 1 training, the nursery had introduced a number of changes to the environment. These were limited by funding shortages, but there was clear evidence that a number of autism-focused changes had been made. A small 'calm area' had been created in a classroom where one of the children with autism was taught. The calm area had been created in a corner of the room (a large alcove). The walls had been painted in a neutral shade, there were large bean bags, a semi-tent like curtain, and a range of home-made 'fiddle' toys that the little boy liked to play with.

Visual timetables had also been introduced in all rooms. Some of the staff were trained in Makaton sign language, as was the one-to-one worker who looked after a little girl with autism.

The nursery was very keen to access as much autism support, training and advice as they could. The head of the nursery, and the SENCO, felt that until they came across the AET training offer they had been on their own.

All three nurseries had made changes to their provision following AET EY training, and all were keen to continue to improve that provision. In terms of changes in the physical environment, these ranged from extensive to relatively small changes; with financial constraints playing a part in the latter.

8 POST-16 SETTINGS

8.1 Introduction

It did not prove possible to arrange any visits to P-16 settings that had undertaken AET training. However, one FE college interview was arranged with a college CPD trainer (CA) who had delivered Tier 1 training to her college's entire student services staff (some 70 people). The interview was recorded, with permission, fully transcribed and analysed. In addition, the head of transitions (CB) from another college provided feedback on AET training in her college. Summing up the thinking behind choosing the AET training, and its impact, interviewee CB explained:

Currently around 60 Learning Support Assistants have completed the Tier 1 training with a further 60 completing this in March 2015. This will mean that all Learning Support Assistants across the college will have completed the training which will enable them to support learners with autism and other social and communication difficulties who do not have a formal diagnosis of autism to better access learning. The training has enabled staff to have a better awareness and understanding of the challenges students with autism may face along with practical strategies that they are

able to apply when supporting students with autism. Staff have indicated that they feel that they have more confidence and awareness but feel that it would be benefit for all academic staff to complete this training.

(CB)

The college had also arranged for a core team within the learning support staff to take Tier 2 training in order to further strengthen autism provision in the college.

The trainer from college A (CA) said that it had been important that the entire staff of student services was trained in Tier 1, and had briefed the staff (70 people) about the role they had in supporting young people with autism to access the curriculum:

I said to them this is not just about teaching and learning staff, it's about curriculum and you are part of the curriculum, you are quite important actually, because if learners cannot manage their interactions, the support outside a classroom, it might be that they don't succeed just based on not managing those other things.

(CA)

She also stressed the fact that it was not just a case of accessing the curriculum for young people with autism, but also the entire experience of being at college and managing day-to-day life in college. Talking about the impact of the training on the staff, the college trainer said that the training material on sensory issues was the material that staff found interesting and new to them. Beyond that, there was a clear sense that the majority of staff had not appreciated that autism was a life-long condition. The college trainer felt that *'Tier 1 is quite basic, but I always emphasise that with this information*

you can do a lot, you can really go far, and this is all you need to get started'
(CA). The trainer and the college believed that the Tier 1 training had been
successful, and there were plans to offer further Tier 1 training to teaching
staff in the college.

9   LA LEADS SURVEY

9.1 Introduction

In order to generate some data on the extent to which the AET Programme,
and the relevant National Standards and Competency Frameworks, were
familiar to key LA leads in, for example, autism teams and SEN teaching
support services, a short e-survey was sent to LA leads in these services. The
AET hub leads were asked to provide the evaluation team with the contact
details of local service leads, and they were, in turn, contacted by e-mail, and
asked to complete the survey (see Appendix 1: AET Programme 2013-15.
Leads survey). The survey was sent to 12 LA leads at the beginning of
February, 2015, and to one AET hub lead for forwarding to local LA leads.
The survey was completed anonymously, and by 9 March, 2015, eight LA
leads had completed the survey. This represents a snapshot of LA leads'
knowledge of the AET Programme for schools, EY and P-16 settings, and the
ways in which they promote the Programme, the NS and the CF. The data is
presented in in relation to knowledge of the AET Programme, LA leads'
activities to promote the AET Programme, knowledge of the NS and CF, and
the promotion and use of the NS and CF.

9.2 LA leads e-survey, findings

9.2.1 Knowledge of the AET Programme

Overall, awareness of the school, EY and P-16 AET Programme was high.
Five of the eight respondents were 'very aware' of the schools programme,
with three being 'aware'. In terms of the EY programme six were 'very aware'
and two, 'aware'. For P-16, one respondent was 'not aware', but five were

'very aware' and two were 'aware'. The respondents were asked whether they had any role in informing EY, school, or P-16 settings of the AET offer, and seven said they had.

The seven respondents who had taken a role in disseminating knowledge of the AET Programme gave a variety of examples of how they have done this; which are presented in Box 9

Box 9 LA leads and their role in disseminating knowledge of the AET Programme

- Discussed with workforce development in my council to obtain funding to trial the Early Years. Discussed the need for post 16 with same. Briefed SENCO's, Advisory staff re: courses. Supported my team (AS Outreach) to publicise AET Programme.
- I have informed the Early Years Strategic Development Manager of the AET training. I have informed post-16 commissioners who invited me to a meeting with the FE Colleges. I brought the head teacher of [name] Teaching School who will be rolling out the training. The settings were very interested in booking training. I run network meetings for our resourced provisions and have shared the training with them.
- Through Head Teacher meetings, both [name] Special School Heads meetings, and locality Heads meetings
- Advertised programmes in 1/2 termly SENCO Business meetings. Commissioned AET to deliver training for our service. Directed settings/practitioners to AET trainers for further advice
- We refer to AET materials and training in our own training.
- Dissemination through SENCO networks and in school support.

> - As Head of AS outreach service already aware of schools training sent details of the awareness raising days to colleagues in Early Years and Portage. Have dates for programmes near us and will be informing EYS

Although most of the LA leads were involved with disseminating knowledge of the AET offers, only one lead could give an estimate of how many settings had taken up the AET Programme; in that case, some 30 EY settings.

9.2.2 The National Standards and Competency Frameworks

For both the NS and CF, LA leads were unanimous in agreeing that they were 'aware' or 'very aware' of the NS and CF, with four being 'very aware' and four 'aware' of the NS, and four being 'very aware', with four 'aware' of the CF. However, only three of the leads said that they had taken any role in informing settings about the NS and CF. Their responses are presented below:

- Worked with resourced mainstream provisions to implement competencies for staff development. Supported my team (AS Outreach) to publicise to mainstream schools
- These frameworks are being introduced to our resourced provisions as part of the support to the QA & monitoring process. I have made our special schools aware of them, but they are not yet being formally incorporated into reflective practice. We haven't yet introduced them to mainstream settings
- We refer to them during training, and have also used the materials with SENCOs/Inclusion officers during planning

Nonetheless, five of the LA leads said that they had incorporated the NS and CF into their own work with settings. Examples of how this was being done

were, *'all new staff members are made aware of it. The new non-teaching staff use it in their induction process'*; *'begun to use the competency framework for key staff in school with responsibility for ASC provision'*; *'we are an outreach Service and are wanting to embed standards/competencies in schools - possibly as part of school improvement plans. We are in the very first stages of developing a strategy to role this out. Having heard that the AET are updating we may wait to see what changes there are'*.

9.2.3 LA leads – other comments

The survey gave the respondents an opportunity to make any other comments in regard to the AET training programmes that they would like to bring to the attention of the evaluation, and six respondents did so. Respondent's noted that the training fulfilled a need for generic autism training, that the training was very welcome, and that training delegates were positive about the training. However, one respondent noted that a special school version of the training would be useful. There was also a comment that the AET hub in the respondent's area had limited capacity. The same respondent also argued that the LA team could offer *'better tailored training at level 2/3, at better value for money, with the added value of local knowledge and follow up. In particular we run an extended course which goes beyond the level 3 offer. As local partners we can measure impact better as part of an on-going relationship with our settings.'* The additional comments are presented in Box 10.

Box 10 LA lead additional comments on the AET Programme

- *We are seeing the AET training as being our response to generic training for Early Years settings. The AS Outreach team would then provide more specialist training both centralised and also targeted around specific children.*

- *We have had good feedback from the participants in the Tier 2 training and have further training planned. 1 x Tier 1 training session for SENCOs in Early Years settings, 1 x Tier 1 training for child minders, 1 x Tier 2 training for Early Years Practitioners and also 1 x Tier 3 training for setting managers/SENCOs and Local Authority advisers. I understand individual settings have also looked into further training for the whole staff as a result of attending the Tier 2 training.*

- *As a special school, we felt, following the Level 2 training, that the content was mostly what staff knew and practised everyday already. A special school version of the AET training would be much more useful to our environment.*

- *The level one training is very engaging and professional, and could be very useful for universal settings - as our small team is not able to cover all staff in all setting and areas of our LA. However, there is currently insufficient capacity within the AET to deliver this in our area. We feel that we offer superior, better tailored training at level 2/3, at better value for money, ourselves, with the added value of local knowledge and follow up. I particular we run an extended course which goes beyond the level 3 offer. As local partners we can measure impact better as part of an on-going relationship with our settings.*

PART 3 Evaluation Data

10 EARLY YEARS: TIERS 1, 2, and 3

10.1 EY Tier 1

10.1.1 The training

The Early Years Tier 1 training delegates were invited to complete a short questionnaire at the end. The total number of completed questionnaires was **467**. Not everyone responded to every question so the total (N) in each table varies slightly.

Table 10.1 shows the number of respondents in each of the four Early Years hubs[8] in **28 different training sessions.** Just over half (51%) of the delegates attended training delivered by the Birmingham City Council hub.

Table 10.1   Responses by Early Years hub

Hub	Number	Percentage
North Yorkshire County Council	118	25
National Autistic Society	32	7
Leicestershire County Council	80	17
Birmingham City Council	237	51
Total	467	100

Source: Post-course questionnaires

We first describe the demographic characteristics of those who attended and then their views of the training.

10.1.2 About the training delegates

To give an indication of the range of people who attended, delegates were asked to state their job. The responses showed that the Early Years training had attracted a wide range of Early Years professionals and support staff. Those describing themselves as teaching assistants made up the largest

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[8] In our reporting of responses, percentages are rounded to nearest integer and so may not sum to 100.

single group, followed by teachers. Other roles represented included senior and middle managers, SENCOs and Area SENCOs, childcare workers, child-minders, children's' nurses, community nursery nurses, family outreach workers, Early Years/Nursery workers/practitioners/professionals, health visitors, learning support assistants, lunchtime supervisors, nursery/pre-school assistants, and one speech and language therapist.

Participants were also asked in which LA area they worked. Most responses corresponded to the hub areas, with a minority being more general, such as 'all areas', 'South', 'West Midlands. A minority of responses indicated some participants worked in LAs beyond the immediate hub area; for example, 'Gateshead', 'Northumberland'.[9]

Almost all the delegates were female (97%). This reflects the gendered composition of the Early Years and Foundation Stage workforce.

Delegates came from a range of educational backgrounds (Table 10.2), with over half educated to below degree level.

Table 10.2   Trainees' highest educational qualification

Highest qualification	%
None	2
1-4 GCSEs or equivalent	15
5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	12
A/AS levels or equivalent	13
Higher education below degree	16
University degree	32
Other	10

N = 434.

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[9] Some interpreted the question as being about 'area of work' rather than geographic area and so responses included, for example, 'Under 3 Unit', 'Early Years'.

Those ticking 'other' provided details. The most frequent 'other' qualifications were also below degree level, at Level 3 e.g. NVQ Level 3s or Level 3s in Childcare.

Regarding ethnicity, the delegate group more or less reflected the general population with 82% ticking 'White-British', 18% ticking 'Other' and 5% did not respond. Those ticking 'other' wrote their own description of their ethnicity. There were 32 different descriptions, the most common one being 'Pakistani' written by 7 people.

The delegates included people across the working age range, from 16-19 to aged over 60 years but most were in their 20s, 30s or 40s (Table 10.3).

Table 10.3   Trainees' age bands

Age band	%
16-19	2
20-29	28
30-39	22
40-49	28
50-59	17
60 or over	3

N = 454

When asked about previous experience of teaching/working with one or more children on the autism spectrum, 82% said Yes and 18% said No. Overall, **46% had previously had no training on autism** and a further 33% had only ever had a short session on this before (Table 10.4).

Table 10.4   Previous training on understanding autism (%)

Length of previous training	%
None	46
Short session	33
1 day	11
2 days	3
More than 2 days	7

N = 451

We filtered responses to look in more detail at previous training on autism and found that, **of those with experience of teaching/working with at least one child on the autism spectrum, 39% had had no previous training on understanding autism** and a further 38% had only had a short course.

Overall, the Early Years Tier 1 training seems to have attracted delegates that are demographically representative of the target audience. In addition, the majority had had no or very little previous training on autism. This suggests that the training was successful in reaching its target audience.

10.1.3 Delegates' views of the training
As Table 10.5 shows, delegates' views of the training were heavily skewed (89% to 93%) to the positive end of a 5-point scale. The training was viewed as **worthwhile by 93%** (with 78% 'strongly agreeing'). This is a very strong endorsement of the training.

Table 10.5   Your views of the training (%)

Statements	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly Agree 5
a) It was worthwhile.	1	1	4	15	78
b) It has increased my knowledge about autism.	2	2	7	22	68
c) It has increased my awareness of the differences that young children with autism may experience.	1	2	6	26	66
d) It will help me to be more understanding of the types of individual differences I need to flag up.	1	1	7	25	66
e) It has made me aware of at least one positive change I/we could make relatively easily to benefit young children who are, or may be, on the autism spectrum.	1	1	6	24	68
f) It has confirmed that what I/we already do in our Early Years setting fits in with current thinking on good practice.	1	<1	6	35	57
g) It made me aware of where to find out more about autism.	1	2	8	29	60
h) It made me interested in further training about autism.	2	1	6	20	71

N varied from 444 to 466.

In an encouraging sign for the potential market for the more in-depth levels of AET training for the Early Years, Table 6.10 also shows that just over 90% said the training had increased their desire for further training on autism. Further, 89% indicated that the training had made them aware of where they could go to find out more about autism.

10.1.4 Making a difference

Delegates were asked to make a comment in response to the question, 'tell us about at least one positive change you plan to make [as a consequence of the training], or why you think you will not be making any such changes'. Of the 467 respondents, 335 (72%) made a comment. Almost of all of these described a positive change they planned to make but a minority explained why this was not possible: for example, a supply teacher felt unable to influence the practice in the setting, and others did not have any children with autism in their setting.

A small number of 'change' themes emerged strongly from the other responses. In order of frequency of responses, these were planned changes to do with seven broad areas (bulleted below). For each one, we give illustrative examples.

- paying more attention to communication and interaction style with children with autism, including using shorter sentences, giving more time for responses, using visual aids

  'I will try to use the '10 second' rule more and be more patient to let them have a chance to reply.'

  'I have learned to keep speech less complicated, more focused and visual.'

- being much more aware and understanding of the differences of children with autism

  'Be more understanding/aware of things that may set children on the spectrum off/make them uncomfortable, and gear activities and areas towards interests and likes.'

  'Children with autism have differences in the way they interact, play and develop relationships and [experience] sensory information.'

- paying attention to the sensory needs of children with autism within the learning environment

  'Having a tent/quiet area.'

  'Observing sensory needs to make changes to the environment.'

  'Will try to adapt the environment to meet child's specific needs, such as having a spot/cushion to use when doing storytime/singing.'

- finding out more about individual children's needs, strengths and interests and using the information to improve teaching and learning for that child

  'One positive change for a child in our Nursery on autism spectrum would be to accommodate his interest in sand play in other curriculum areas.'

  'To build children's interest in to their learning more.'

- sharing information from the training with colleagues and when training others

  'Will display the four key areas of difference on our information boards.'

  'Will arrange training [via trainer] for the staff team.'

  'I can mention some of the tips shared today when I deliver ELDP training.'

- working more closely with the parents of children with autism or possible autism

  'Keyworkers working more closely with families implementing strategies etc.'

  'I have more practical ideas to share with parents I support who may have autistic children.'

- using learning from the training to better understand and work with other children too, not only those with autism

> 'Made me more aware of differences in children in general in my classroom, different skills they have that I can develop.'
>
> 'Use of pupil profiles when children start nursery.'

In addition, there were comments indicating that the training had whetted an appetite to seek out more and better resources to put changes into practice. For example:

> 'Use the resources suggested.'
>
> 'Need more sensory resources.'
>
> 'Investigating the resources section [of AET website] re visual timetable.'

The comments gave a clear sense that the training had produced strong, focused reflection on change that could be implemented in the delegates' settings.

10.1.5 Comments on the training

Delegates were asked, in an open question, to comment on the training session; of the 467 respondents, 212 (45%) made a comment. The comments were very positive. A small number of comments related to the desire of hand-outs that were based on the visual presentations to ease note-taking.

Typical examples of the comments made included the following:

> 'Very interesting and well presented. Has helped me understand autism a lot more and made me consider things I could do to help, such as use more visuals.'

> 'Training very easy to understand. Like way it followed the EYFS [Early years Foundation Stage] principles. Visuals very good. Liked use of pictures to let you know video clip was going to be used.'

> 'Good session, very informative. Helps you to see things from an autistic point of view.'

'Excellent presentation with chances to listen to others' comments. Video very useful and interesting, especially from those who have autism and parents' perspective.'

10.2 EY Tier 2 training: 'Good Autism practice'

10.2.1 The Tier 2 data

The Early Years **Tier 2** training delegates were invited to complete a short questionnaire at the beginning ('pre') and at the end ('post'). The total number of completed questionnaires was **179 pre** and **179 post**. Not everyone responded to every question so the total (N) in each table varies slightly.

Table 6.6 shows the number of respondents in each of the four Early Years hubs[10] in **14 different training sessions.** The largest number of delegates (72) attended training delivered by the Birmingham City Council hub.

Table 10.6   Responses by Early Years hub

Hub	Number	Percentage
National Autistic Society	42	24
North Yorkshire County Council	40	22
Leicestershire County Council	25	14
Birmingham City Council	72	40
Total	179	100

Source: Post-course questionnaires

We first describe the demographic characteristics of those who completed our questionnaires. Then we summarise their views of the training and provide data on the impact the training had on their knowledge and understanding related to four relevant domains.

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[10] In our reporting of responses, percentages are rounded to nearest integer and so may not sum to 100.

10.2.2 About the Early Years Tier 2 training delegates

The Early Years 'Good Autism Practice' training was mainly intended for those with day to day contact with at least one child with autism. To give an indication of the range of people who attended, delegates were asked to state their job. The responses showed that the Tier 2 Early Years training attracted a broad range of staff roles across the spectrum of responsibility levels from teaching assistants (the largest single group at 43 of 176) to those with management roles, such as 'Assistant Headteacher'.

Participants were also asked in which LA area they worked. Nine different LA areas were mentioned: Birmingham, Bradford, Durham, Gateshead, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, Newcastle, Rutland and Tyneside.

The delegates worked in a wide range of Early Years settings. These included, for example, an ASD resource base, the local pre-school learning alliance, children's centres, children centre nurseries, child minders, children's residential care, local authority home tuition team, play groups, school nurseries, private nurseries, and primary schools.

Almost all the delegates were female (168 of 171: 98%). This reflects the gendered composition of the Early Years and Foundation Stage workforce.

The majority (61%) of the Tier 3 delegates did not have a university degree (Table 10.7).

Table 10.7   Trainees' highest educational qualification

Highest qualification	N	%
None	0	0
GCSEs or equivalent	41	24
A/AS levels or equivalent	25	14
Higher education below degree	40	23
University degree	55	32

Other	13	8

N = 174.

Those with 'other' qualifications were mainly referring to Level 3 qualifications, such as 'NVQ Level 3 Childcare'.

Regarding ethnicity, there were 26 different self-descriptions. The majority (60%) contained the word, 'British': for example, 'White British', 'British Pakistani'. The remaining 40% included 1-5 people in each of the other categories: for example, 'African', 'Black', English', 'German', 'Indian', 'Mixed race'.

The Tier 2 delegates were most likely to be in their 20s or 30s but just under a third were older than that. (Table 10.8).

Table 10.8   Trainees' age bands

Age band	N	%
16-19	0	0
20-29	50	28
30-39	54	31
40-49	46	26
50-59	26	15
60 or over	1	0.6

N = 177

The majority (61%) of delegates did not train or lead other staff in their setting, whilst 39% did.

Just under half (47%) said they would be interested in attending additional AET training (Tier 3) related to leading/training other staff in an early years setting. A further 33% said that they would 'possibly' be interested in this. This suggests that the Tier 2 training is a good recruitment ground for Tier 3 participants.

10.2.3 Delegates' views of the Tier 2 training

As Table 10.9 shows, delegates' views of the training were very strongly skewed to the positive end of a 4-point scale: in each case, 99% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the positive statement. For example, the training was viewed as **worthwhile by 99%** (with 85% 'strongly agreeing'). This is exceptionally strong endorsement of the training.

Table 10.9   Views of the EY Tier 2 training (%)

Statements	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	Strongly Agree 4
a) I found this training worthwhile.	1	0	15	85
b) This training has increased my knowledge about autism.	1	0	17	83
c) This training has given me information and practical ideas that I will be able to use in my setting.	1	0	21	79
d) I would recommend this training to other people working in similar [Early Years] settings.	1	0	15	85

N = 179.

In an encouraging sign for the potential market for this Tier 2 AET training for the Early Years, Table 10.9 also shows that **99% would recommend it to others** working in similar Early Years settings.

10.3 Evaluation data from the Tier 2 pre- and post-training questionnaires

Before the delivery of the Tier 2 training, all participants were asked to self-assess their knowledge and understanding of:

1) autism

2) partnership working

3) enabling environments for children with autism

4) learning and development of children with autism.

In each case, there were three statements to which participants responded on a scale of 1 ('strongly disagree') to 4 ('strongly agree'). After the training, participants were asked to complete the same self-assessment, having previously handed in the pre-course questionnaire.

10.3.1 Self-assessed knowledge and understanding about autism

Table 10.10 shows that there was a statistically high significant rise in self-reported knowledge and understanding about autism.

Table 10.10 Knowledge and understanding about autism (pre- and post-training) (%)

Statements		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4	p[11]
1a. I am aware of the four key areas of difference that children with autism may have.	Pre-	9	45	42	6	
	Post-	1	0	26	74	***
1b. I am aware of the individual needs of	Pre-	4	21	62	13	
	Post-	1	1	32	67	***

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[11] p is a measure of statistical significance

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children with autism in my setting.

		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4	p
1c. I am aware of any other needs & conditions that the children with autism in my setting may have.	Pre-	3	31	55	10	
	Post-	1	0	37	62	***

N varied from 176 to 179.

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

10.3.2 Self-assessed knowledge and understanding of partnership working

Table 10.11 shows that there was a **highly significant rise** ($p < .001$) in the post-training self-assessment ratings of knowledge and understanding of partnership working in relation to children with autism, compared to before the training.

Table 10.11   Knowledge and understanding of partnership working (pre- and post-training) (%)

Statements		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4	p[12]
2a. I know a range of services, advice or support that can be accessed to help me support children with autism	Pre-	3	35	57	5	
	Post-	0	2	52	47	***
	Pre-	1	3	64	32	

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[12] p is a measure of statistical significance in the difference between the pre- and post-ratings.

		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4	
2b. I am aware of the importance of working with others to support children with autism.	Post-	0	2	24	74	***
2c. I know how to support children with autism in their peer relationships	Pre-	3	46	48	3	
	Post-	0	1	42	57	***

N varied from 177 to 179.

Note: * *p* <.05, ** *p*<.01, *** *p*<.001

10.3.3 Self-assessed knowledge and understanding of enabling environments for children with autism

Table 10.12 shows that there was a **highly significant rise** (*p*<.001) in the post-training self-assessment ratings of knowledge and understanding of enabling environments for children with autism, compared to before the training.

Table 10.12 Knowledge and understanding of enabling environments for children with autism (pre- and post-training) (%)

Statements		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4	*p*[13]
3a. I know how the physical environment in my setting might affect a child with autism.	Pre-	2	23	62	13	
	Post-	1	0	33	67	***
	Pre-	1	26	58	16	

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[13] *p* is a measure of statistical significance in the difference between the pre- and post-ratings.

Statements		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4	p
3b. I know how to use visual aids to support children with autism.	Post-	1	1	27	71	***
3c. I know how to adapt my style of interaction to suit individual children with autism.	Pre-	1	36	52	11	
	Post-	1	1	39	60	***

N varied from 177 to 179.

Note: * $p <.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

10.3.4 Self-assessed knowledge and understanding of enabling environments for children with autism

Table 10.13 shows that there was a **highly significant rise** ($p<.001$) in the post-training self-assessment ratings of knowledge and understanding of enabling environments for children with autism, compared to before the training.

Table 10.13 Knowledge and understanding of enabling environments for children with autism (pre- and post-training) (%)

Statements		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4	p[14]
3a. I know how the physical environment in my setting might affect a child with autism.	Pre-	2	23	62	13	
	Post-	1	0	33	67	***
3b. I know how to use visual aids to support children with autism.	Pre-	1	26	58	16	
	Post-	1	1	27	71	***

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[14] p is a measure of statistical significance in the difference between the pre- and post-ratings.

		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4	p
3c. I know how to adapt my style of interaction to suit individual children with autism.	Pre-	1	36	52	11	
	Post-	1	1	39	60	***

N varied from 177 to 179.

Note: * *p* <.05, ** *p*<.01, *** *p*<.001

10.3.5 Self-assessed knowledge and understanding of learning and development of children with autism

Table 10.14 shows that there was a **highly significant rise** (*p*<.001) in the post-training self-assessment ratings of knowledge and understanding of learning and development of children with autism, compared to before the training.

Table 10.14   Knowledge and understanding of learning and development of children with autism (pre- and post-training) (%)

Statements		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4	p^{15}
4a. I know how to monitor progress and set goals for the children with autism in my setting.	Pre-	7	50	37	6	
	Post-	1	3	57	40	***
4b. I know that children with autism might have differences in understanding information.	Pre-	0	7	69	24	
	Post-	1	1	34	64	***

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[15] *p* is a measure of statistical significance in the difference between the pre- and post-ratings.

| 4c. I am aware of any differences in feeding, sleeping and toileting affecting children with autism in my setting. | Pre- | 1 | 23 | 60 | 17 | |
| | Post- | 1 | 1 | 47 | 51 | *** |

N varied from 177 to 179.

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

10.3.6 Overview

The findings reported here indicate that the Early years Tier 2 training, 'Good Autism Practice', was highly effective in improving delegates knowledge and understanding in four key areas: autism, working in partnership to support children with autism, enabling environments for children with autism, and learning and development of children with autism.

10.6 EY Tier 3 training: 'Leading Good Autism Practice'

10.6.1 The training

The Early Years **Tier 3** training delegates were invited to complete a short questionnaire at the beginning ('pre') and at the end ('post'). The total number of completed questionnaires was **30 pre** and **30 post**. Not everyone responded to every question so the total (N) in each table varies slightly.

Table 10.15 shows the number of respondents in each of the three Early Years hubs[16] in **5 different training sessions.** Just over half (53%) of the delegates attended training delivered by the Birmingham City Council hub.

Table 10.15   Responses by Early Years hub

Hub	Number	Percentage
National Autistic Society	6	20

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[16] In our reporting of responses, percentages are rounded to nearest integer and so may not sum to 100.

Leicestershire County Council	8	27
Birmingham City Council	16	53
Total	30	100

<div align="right">Source: Post-course questionnaires</div>

We first describe the demographic characteristics of those who attended and then their views of the training.

10.6.2 About the Early Years Tier 3 training delegates

To give an indication of the range of people who attended, delegates were asked to state their job. The responses showed that the Tier 3 Early Years training had attracted, as intended, mainly teachers, SENCOs and managers, rather than teaching assistants. Eight of 30 had SENCO as at least part of their role. Five had other SEN teaching roles, for example an autism outreach teacher, an early years SEN/Inclusion teacher. Two delegates were TAs.

Participants were also asked in which LA area they worked. Eight different LA areas were mentioned: Birmingham, Durham, Gateshead, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, Newcastle, Northamptonshire and Sunderland.[17]

The settings where delegates worked included children's centres, children centre nurseries, school nurseries, private nurseries, and primary schools. Other delegates worked across a range of settings in supply, training or peripatetic support roles

Almost all the delegates were female (27 of 28: 96%). This reflects the gendered composition of the Early Years and Foundation Stage workforce.

Two-thirds (20 of 30) of the Tier 3 delegates had a university degree (This compares to around one-third of those who undertook the Tier 1 training.)

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[17] Some interpreted the question as being about 'area of work' rather than geographic area and so responses included, for example, 'Locality teacher', 'SENCO'.

Table 10.16   Trainees' highest educational qualification

Highest qualification	N	%
None	0	0
GCSEs or equivalent	6	20
A/AS levels or equivalent	1	3
Higher education below degree	2	7
University degree	20	67
Other	1	3

N = 30.

Regarding ethnicity, 25 of 30 delegates described themselves as 'British' or 'White British'. There were three other ethnicity descriptions: Asian-Burmese, Indian, and White European.

Compared to Tier 1 delegates, the Tier 3 delegates were skewed to the older end of the age range with 13 of 30 being in their 50s (Table 10.17).

Table 10.17   Trainees' age bands

Age band	N	%
16-19	0	0
20-29	3	10
30-39	7	23
40-49	7	23
50-59	13	43
60 or over	0	0

N = 30

Of those working in a setting (as opposed to multiple settings), 21 of 26 said that staff in that setting currently worked with one or more pupils on the autism spectrum. Most delegates (25 of 30; 83%) had previously undertaken training on autism of at least one day's length. However, only a minority (9 of 30; 30%)

had previously attended the AET 'Good Autism Practice' training for the Early Years.

Overall, the Early Years Tier 3 training seems to have attracted delegates that are demographically representative of the target audience. Compared to the Tier 1 delegates, overall, they were older, educated to degree level and were teachers, SENCOs and managers/leaders rather than teaching assistants.

10.6.3 Delegates' views of the training

As Table 10.18 shows, delegates' views of the training were heavily skewed (85% to 94%) to the positive end of a 4-point scale. The training was viewed as **worthwhile by 94%** (with 77% 'strongly agreeing'). This is a very strong endorsement of the training.

Table 10.18   Your views of the training (%)

Statements	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
a) It was worthwhile.	0	7	17	77
b) It will help me promote more understanding of children with autism.	0	10	17	72
c) It has given me practical approaches to develop positive changes in my setting.	4	11	14	71
d) It has made me keen to use the AET Early Years National Standards to reflect on and develop autism practice in my setting/s.	0	7	13	77
e) I would recommend this training to other people working in similar Early Years settings.	0	7	14	79

N varies from 28 to 30.

In an encouraging sign for the potential market for this Tier 3 AET training for the Early Years, Table 6.10 also shows that **over 90% would recommend it to others** working in similar Early Years settings.

10.6.4 Comparing data from the T3 pre- and post-training questionnaires

10.6.4.1Self-assessed awareness of the frameworks for good practice
Before the delivery of the Tier 3 training, all participants were asked to self-assess their awareness of the frameworks of good practice on a scale of 1 ('not aware') to 4 ('considered in relation to my setting'). The statements related to being aware of:

- The AET Early Years National Standards
- The SEND Code of Practice (2014)
- The relevance of the Early Years Foundation Stage to good autism practice
- The relevance of the Children and Families Act 2014 to good autism practice
- The obligations of settings in relation to children with autism under the Equality Act 2010.

After the training, participants were asked to complete the same self-assessment. This time the statement included the phrase, 'more aware; and participants indicated their views on a 4 point scale from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (4). Table 6.11 shows the results.

Table 10.19   Awareness of Good Practice frameworks following the Early years Tier 3 training (%)

Statements Because of this training course, I am **more** aware of … :	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	Strongly Agree 4
a) … the AET Early Years National Standards.	0	0	20	80
b) … the SEND Code of Practice (2014).	0	7	33	60
c) … the relevance of the Early Years Foundation Stage to good autism practice.	0	10	23	67
d) … the relevance of the Children and Families Act 2014 to good autism practice.	0	7	33	60
e) … the obligations of settings in relation to children with autism under the Equality Act 2010.	0	7	30	63

N = 30.

10.6.4.2 Self-assessed knowledge of how to support staff to develop good practice

In a similar way to the frameworks of good practice statements, the pre-course questionnaire also had three statements relating to supporting staff to develop good practice in an Early Years setting. The statements were:

- a) I enable staff to observe and assess children in my setting.
- b) I ensure my staff know of different systems for recording children's progress.
- c) I ensure that practitioners in my setting know their role (with guidance and support) in the process of identifying children with autism.

After the training, participants were asked to indicate their level of disagreement/agreement with statements indicating that they were 'more

likely' to know these things. Table 10.20 shows the results. In each case, over 80% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that this was the case.

Table 10.20 Knowledge of how to support staff to develop good practice following the Early Years Tier 3 training (%)

Statements Because of this training course, I am **more** likely to … :	**Strongly Disagree** **1**	**2**	**3**	**Strongly Agree** **4**
a) … enable staff to observe and assess children in my setting.	0	18	18	64
b) … ensure my staff know of different systems for recording children's progress.	0	14	21	64
c) … ensure that practitioners in my setting know their role (with guidance and support) in the process of identifying children with autism.	0	18	18	64

N = 28.

10.6.4.3   Self-assessed knowledge of how to provide staff with tools to develop their own provision

Table 10.21 shows how participants rated statements relating to their being 'more likely', because of the training, to provide staff with certain tools to develop practice in an Early Years setting.

Table 10.21   Knowledge of how to provide staff with tools to develop practice following the Early Years Tier 3 training (%)

Statements Because of this training course, I am **more** likely to … :	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	Strongly Agree 4
a) … emphasise to staff the importance of working with parents/carers of children with autism to improve outcomes..	0	14	21	66
b) … ensure that practitioners in my setting know a range of ways to evaluate the learning of children with autism.	0	14	28	59
c) … ensure that staff know the questions to ask in order to evaluate specific approaches for children with autism.	0	14	28	59

N = 29.

After the pilot phase, a further statement was added to this section. Answered by 23 people, it showed that half of them 'strongly agreed' they were more likely, after the training, 'to ensure staff understand the implications for practice of the four key areas of difference children with autism may have'. A further 13% 'agreed' this was the case.

10.7   Open comments on the Early Years Tier 3 training

Participants were invited to write about what else, if anything, they would have liked in the training. This opportunity was used to add rather more open comments about the training. Just over half (16 of 30) wrote such a comment. Of these, four were completely positive. For example:

> *'Fabulous training. Feel very enthusiastic about going back to my work place and encouraging other staff.'*

Other comments were mixed or only raised issues (the latter were predominantly in relation to one training delivery session). The key feedback messages were:

- to include a range of activities, not only discussion
- to make the video clips more specific to the learning points
- to have a stronger focus on autism
- to make terminology consistent
- to reorder the slides – perhaps avoiding artificial fit with EYFS
- to make the content clearly for those in management roles.

11 POST-16: TIERS 1, 2, and 3

11.1 Post-16, Tier 1 training: 'Making Sense of Autism: Raising Awareness

11.1.1 The training

The Post-16 Tier 1 training delegates were invited to complete a short questionnaire at the end. The total number of completed questionnaires was **200**. Not everyone responded to every question so the total (N) in each table varies slightly.

Table 11.1 shows the number of respondents in each of the four Post-16 hubs[18] in **10 different training sessions.** The delegates were more or less evenly split across the four hub.

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[18] In our reporting of responses, percentages are rounded to nearest integer and so may not sum to 100.

Table 11.1   Responses by Post-16 hub

Hub	Number	Percentage
Ambitious About Autism	50	25
Birmingham City Council	46	23
KAFEC	50	25
NORSACA	54	27
Total	200	100

Source: Post-course questionnaires

We first describe the demographic characteristics of those who completed our questionnaire and then their views of the training.

11.1.2 About the training delegates

To give an indication of the range of people who attended, delegates were asked to state their job. The responses showed that the Post-16 Raising Awareness training attracted a very wide range of professionals and support staff. Those describing themselves as teaching assistants made up the largest single group, followed by teachers. Other roles represented included senior and middle managers, tutors, lecturers, café and shop workers, and work placement coordinators.

Participants were also asked in which LA area they worked. Eight different LAs were listed: Birmingham, Bromley, Gloucestershire, Kent, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, and Rotherham.[19]

The majority of the delegates were female (81%).

Delegates came from a range of educational backgrounds (Table11.2), with roughly equal percentages having a degree (43%) or not (48%).

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[19] Some interpreted the question as being about 'area of work' rather than geographic area and so responses included, for example, 'Foundation Learning', 'Construction'.

Table 11.2   Delegates' highest educational qualification

Highest qualification	%
None	0
1-4 GCSEs or equivalent	11
5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	12
A/AS levels or equivalent	9
Higher education below degree	16
University degree	43
Other	9

N = 173.

Those ticking 'other' provided details. The most frequent 'other' qualifications were post-graduate certificates and Masters degrees.

Regarding ethnicity, the delegate group more or less reflected the general population with 86% ticking 'White-British' and 14% ticking 'Other'. Those ticking 'other' wrote their own description of their ethnicity. There were 14 different descriptions, the most common one being 'Black British' written by 6 people.

The delegates included people across the working age range, from 16-19 to aged over 60 years but most were in their 40s or 50s (Table 11.3).

Table 11.3   Delegates' age bands

Age band	%
16-19	15
20-29	9
30-39	14
40-49	28
50-59	25
60 or over	9

N = 181

When asked about previous experience of teaching/working with one or more learners on the autism spectrum, 77% said Yes and 23% said No. Overall, **52% had previously had no training on autism** and a further 31% had only ever had a short session on this before (Table 11.4).

Table 11.4   Previous training on understanding autism (%)

Length of previous training	%
None	52
Short session	31
1 day	6
2 days	2
More than 2 days	9

N = 195

Overall, the Post-16 Raising Awareness training attracted delegates from a wide range of Post-16 job roles. In addition, the majority had had no or very little previous training on autism. This suggests that the training was successful in reaching its target audience.

11.1.3 Delegates' views of the training

As Table 11.5 shows, delegates' views of the training were heavily skewed (73% to 92%) to the positive end of a 5-point scale (excluding statement (f) which is of a different type). The training was viewed as **worthwhile by 92%** (with 64% 'strongly agreeing'). This is a very strong endorsement of the training. Similarly**, 90% agreed** that the training had increased their knowledge about autism.

Table 11.5   Views of the training (%)

Statements	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly Agree 5
a) It was worthwhile.	1	2	6	28	64
b) It has increased my knowledge about autism.	2	3	6	36	53
c) It has increased my awareness of the differences that learners with autism may experience.	1	3	9	35	52
d) It will help me to be more understanding of learners with autism.	1	2	10	31	57
e) It has made me aware of at least one positive change I/we could make relatively easily to benefit learners with autism.	1	2	10	38	49
f) It has confirmed that what I/we already do in our Post-16 setting fits in with current thinking.	1	3	32	35	30
g) It made me aware of where to find out more about autism.	1	3	16	34	46
h) It made me interested in further training about autism.	2	7	19	30	43

N varied from 195 to 200.

In an encouraging sign for the potential market for Post-16 Tiers 2 and 3 AET training for the Early Years, Table 4.5 also shows that over 70% said the training had made them interested in further training on autism.

11.1.4 Making a difference

Delegates were asked to make a comment in response to the prompt, 'tell us about at least one positive change you plan to make [as a consequence of the

training] to better support young people with autism [in your setting], or why you think you will not be making any such changes'. Of the 200 respondents, **133 (67%)** made a comment. All but three of these described a positive change they planned to make (these three exceptions explained they were not currently in contact with learners with autism). The planned changes described were clear and specific and illustrated that the training had prompted reflection on practice.

11.1.5 Comments on the training

Delegates were asked, in an open question, to comment on the training session; of the 200 respondents, 84 (42%) made a comment. These comments were overall very positive. Examples included:

'Has helped me understand autism better and given me more knowledge on how to talk to and understand learners with autism.'

'Confirmed my knowledge of autism but challenged some of my views.'

Excellent two hours which has made me more aware of problems encountered relating to autism.'

'Really enjoyed hearing from the autistic students that came to speak in the presentation.'

'Was refreshing to see autism from an autistic point of view.

'Was very important and will make a lot of difference.'

11.1.6 Overview

The findings reported here show that the delegates viewed the post-16 Raising Awareness training very positively. It had increased knowledge and understanding, and stimulated reflection and the desire to make positive changes in practice.

11.2 Post-16, Tier 2 training: 'Making Sense of Autism: for practitioners'

11.2.1 The Tier 2 data

The Post-16 **Tier 2** training delegates were invited to complete a short questionnaire at the beginning ('pre') and at the end ('post'). The total number of completed questionnaires in our sample was **72**. Not everyone responded to every question so the total (N) in each table varies slightly.

Table 11.6 shows the number of respondents in each of three Post-16 hubs[20] in **6 different training sessions.** Just under half the sample (47%) attended sessions delivered by the South East hub.

Table 11.6   Responses by Post-16 hub

Hub	Number	Percentage
Ambitious About Autism	24	33
South East	34	47
NORSACA	14	19
Total	72	100

Source: Post-course questionnaires

We first describe the demographic characteristics of our sample. Then we summarise their views of the training and provide data on the impact the training had on delegates' knowledge and understanding related to four relevant domains:

- Understanding autism in relation to individuals
- Understanding how to engage each learner with autism
- Adjusting and differentiating the curriculum for learners with autism
- Enabling participation of learners with autism.

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[20] In our reporting of responses, percentages are rounded to nearest integer and so may not sum to 100.

11.2.2 About the Post-16 Tier 2 training delegates

The Post-16 Tier 2 training was clearly labelled as 'for practitioners'. Responses to our question about delegates' jobs showed that this training succeeded in attracting practitioners (only 5 job titles included the word 'manager') including learning support workers, lecturers, tutors, support workers, and demonstrators.

Participants were also asked in which LA area they worked. Four different LA areas were mentioned: Derby City, Kent, Nottingham City and Sandwell.

The delegates predominantly worked in Further education colleges (55 of 72). Other settings mentioned included a day centre, a residential setting for adults, 'transport' and 'work-based educational setting'.

The majority of the delegates were female (70%).

About half (49%) of the Tier 2 delegates had a university degree (Table 11.7).

Table 11.7   Delegates' highest educational qualification

Highest qualification	N	%
None	1	1
GCSEs or equivalent	13	18
A/AS levels or equivalent	7	10
Higher education below degree	8	11
University degree	35	49
Other	7	10

N = 71.

Those with 'other' qualifications were mainly referring to post-graduate qualifications, such as masters degrees and postgraduate certificates.

Regarding ethnicity, there were 11 different self-descriptions. The majority (77%) contained the word, 'British': for example, 'White British', 'Black British', 'British Pakistani'. The remaining 23% included 1-4 people in each of the other categories: for example, 'Afro Caribbean', English', 'White', 'White and Asian mixed up'.

The Tier 2 delegates were most likely to be in their 40s or 50s. (Table 11.8).

Table 11.8   Delegates' age bands

Age band	N	%
16-19	0	0
20-29	6	9
30-39	15	21
40-49	23	32
50-59	23	32
60 or over	3	4

N = 71

The majority (89%) of delegates 'currently worked with one or more learners on the autism spectrum'. Over three-quarters (78%) had not attended the AET Post-16 Raising Awareness training: 16 (23%) had done so. Over half (57%) had not previously undertaken a one day, or longer, training on autism.

11.2.3 Delegates' views of the Tier 2 training

As Table 11.9 shows, delegates' views of the training were very strongly skewed to the positive end of a 4-point scale: in each case, 86%-95% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the positive statement. For example, the training was viewed as **worthwhile by 94%** (with 65% 'strongly agreeing'). This is very strong endorsement of the training.

Table 11.9   Views of the Post-16 Tier 2 training (%)

Statements	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	Strongly Agree 4
a) I found this training worthwhile.	0	6	29	65
b) It will help me to be more understanding of learners with autism.	0	6	31	63
c) This training has given me practical approaches to use in my setting.	0	4	41	54
d) It has made me keen to use the AET Post-16 Competency Framework to reflect on and develop my practice with learners.	2	13	57	29
e) I would recommend this training to other people working in similar [Post-16] settings.	0	6	25	69

N varied from 62 to 68.

In an encouraging sign for the potential market for this Post-16 Tier 2 AET training, Table 5.4 also shows that **94% would recommend it to others** working in similar Post-16 settings.

11.2.4 Evaluation data from the Tier 2 pre- and post-training questionnaires

Before the delivery of the Tier 2 training, all participants were asked to self-assess their knowledge and understanding in relation to:

- Understanding autism in relation to individuals
- Understanding how to engage each learner with autism
- Adjusting and differentiating the curriculum for learners with autism

- Enabling participation of learners with autism.

In each case, there were four or five statements to which participants responded on a scale of 1 ('strongly disagree') to 4 ('strongly agree'). After the training, participants were asked to complete the same self-assessment, having previously handed in the pre-course questionnaire. The only difference was that, after the training, the statements began with, 'because of this training course' and included an intensifier such as 'more' or 'wider'.

11.2.5 Self-assessed understanding about autism in relation to individuals
Table 11.10 shows that, for each statement, **between 93% and 100% of participants** self-reported **increased** understanding about autism in relation to individuals

Table 11.10   Understanding about autism in relation to individual
(post-training) (%)

Statements After this training course … :	Strongly Disagree 1	 2	 3	Strongly Agree 4
1a. … I am **more** able to take into account the educational challenges associated with the four key areas of difference that learners with autism may have.	0	3	59	38
1b. … I know **more** about the four main theories currently used to explain the differences associated with autism	0	0	55	45
1c. … I know **more** about how to safeguard learners with autism in relation to vulnerability and stress	0	7	49	44

	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	Strongly Agree 4
1d. … I know **more** about how to work with autistic learners to help each one to build a profile of key information to share with relevant staff.	0	6	51	43
1e. … I can choose from a **wider** range of strategies to support appropriately a specific learner with autism.	0	7	54	39

N varied from 71 to 72.

11.2.6 Self-assessed understanding of how to engage each learner with autism

Table 11.11 shows that, for each statement, **between 87% and 96% of participants** self-reported **increased** understanding of how to engage each learner with autism.

Table 11.12   Understanding of how to engage each learner with autism
(post-training) (%)

Statements **After this training course … :**	**Strongly Disagree** **1**	**2**	**3**	**Strongly Agree** **4**
2a. … I know **more** ways to gain the views of learners with autism.	0	4	56	40
2b. … I know **more** about how to use person centred approaches to enable effective planning for transition to adult life for learners with autism.	0	10	61	30
2c. … I know **more** about how to support learners with autism in their peer relationships, including around relationship development and sexuality.	0	13	60	27
2d … I know **more** about effective strategies to raise peer awareness of the needs and strengths of learners.	0	10	58	32

N varied from 70 to 71.

11.2.7 Self-assessed understanding of adjusting and differentiating the curriculum for learners with autism

Table 11.13 shows that, for each statement, **between 84% and 96% of participants** self-reported **increased** understanding of how to adjust and differentiate the curriculum for learners with autism.

Table 11.13   Understanding of how to adjust and differentiate the curriculum for learners with autism (post-training) (%)

Statements After this training course … :	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	Strongly Agree 4
3a. … I know **more** about how to ensure study programmes for learners with autism address their aspirations for adult life.	0	5	73	22
3b. … I know **more** ways to use technologies to support the independence of learners with autism.	1	15	52	32
3c. … I am able to draw on a **wider** range of resources and strategies to differentiate the curriculum flexibly to suit the individual needs and interests of learners with autism.	2	3	63	32
3d … I know **more** about the key components of effective practice in relating to learners with autism.	1	6	64	29

N varied from 67 to 69.

11.2.8 Self-assessed understanding of how to enable participation of learners with autism

Table 11.14 shows that, for each statement, **over 90% of participants** (91% to 94%) self-reported **increased** understanding of how to enable participation of learners with autism.

Table 11.14   Understanding of how to enable participation of learners with autism (post-training) (%)

Statements After this training course … :	Strongly Disagree 1	 2	 3	Strongly Agree 4
4a. … I understand the possible causes of challenging behaviour.	2	4	44	50
4b. … I know how to observe, record, analyse, de-escalate and reduce concerning behaviours.	0	9	65	27
4c. … I know how to use an effective low arousal approach in crisis situations.	0	7	57	35
4d … I know how to modify the environment in my setting to support the needs of learners with autism.	2	4	52	43

N =68.

11.2.9 Overview

The findings reported here indicate that the Post-16 Tier 2 training, 'Making Sense of Autism: For Practitioners', was highly effective in improving delegates knowledge and understanding in four key areas: understanding autism in relation to individuals; understanding how to engage each learner with autism; adjusting and differentiating the curriculum for learners with autism; enabling participation of learners with autism.

11.2.10   Putting the training into practice

The training delegates were asked to write down two changes – one they could do quickly and one that might take longer, based on what they had learned during the training.

Changes planned as soon as possible

A large majority (62 of 72; 86%) wrote down one change they planned to make as soon as possible, based on the training.

Changes planned over a longer period

Over 70% (72%) of the delegates wrote down a change they'd like to achieve over a longer period of time, based on the training.

The fact that the majority of delegates bothered to take time at the end of the training to specify immediate and more longer term changes they'd like to make, based on the training, is a strong indication that it promoted genuine reflection on practice and created a desire to change practice to better support learners with autism.

11.3 Post-16 Tier 3 training: 'Making Sense of Autism: for managers'

11.3.1 The Tier 3 sample

The Post-16 **Tier 3** training delegates were invited to complete a short questionnaire at the beginning ('pre') and at the end ('post'). The total number of completed questionnaires in our sample was **15**. Not everyone responded to every question so the total (N) in each table varies slightly.

Table 11.15 shows the number of respondents in each of three Post-16 hubs[21] in 3 different training sessions. **Please note that this sample is very small and therefore all results should be treated with caution as being indicative only.** Because the sample is so small, we report numbers only, not percentages.

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[21] In our reporting of responses, percentages are rounded to nearest integer and so may not sum to 100.

Table 11.15   Responses by Post-16 hub

Hub	Number
Birmingham City Council	9
KAFEC	4
NORSACA	2
Total	15

Source: Post-course questionnaires

We first describe the demographic characteristics of our sample. Then we summarise their views of the training and provide data on the impact the training had on delegates' knowledge and understanding related to four relevant domains:

- Leading organisational practice in relation to individuals with autism
- Building personal and professional relationships
- Using the curriculum to support meaningful outcomes for adult life
- Enabling participation of learners with autism.

11.3.2 About the Post-16 Tier 3 training delegates
The Post-16 Tier 3 training was clearly labelled as 'for managers. Responses to our question about delegates' jobs showed that this training mainly attracted those with job titles including words such as 'Co-ordinator', 'Assistant headteacher', Adviser', 'head', 'specialist' that indicate some management responsibilities. Only one delegate had an 'assistant' job title, suggesting a non-managerial role. Just over half (8 of 15) of the delegates had a leadership role that included responsibility for developing provision.

Participants were also asked in which LA area they worked. Five different LA areas were mentioned: Birmingham, Kent, Nottingham City, Staffordshire and Sandwell.

The delegates worked in Further education colleges (9 of 15) and secondary schools with a Sixth Form (6 of 15).

The majority of the delegates were female (11 of 15). All had at least A/AS Level qualifications and over half (9 of 15) had a university degree.

Regarding ethnicity, there were 4 different self-descriptions. The majority (13 of 15) contained the word, 'British': for example, 'White British', 'Black British', 'British'. The remaining descriptions was 'English'.

The Tier 3 delegates were most likely to be in their 40s. (Table 11.16).

Table 11.16   Delegates' age bands

Age band	N
16-19	0
20-29	1
30-39	2
40-49	6
50-59	4
60 or over	1

N = 14

Two-thirds (10 of 15) had not attended the AET Post-16 training for practitioners (Tier 2): 5 had done so. Two-thirds (10 of 15) **had** previously undertaken another one day, or longer, training on autism.

11.3.3 Delegates' views of the Tier 3 training
As Table 11.17 shows, delegates' views of the training were very strongly skewed to the positive end of a 4-point scale: in each case, **all** 'agreed' or

'strongly agreed' with the positive statement. This is very strong endorsement of the training, albeit from a very small sample.

Table 11.17   Views of the Post-16 Tier 3 training

Statements	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
a) I found this training worthwhile.	0	0	4	11
b) It will help me to promote more understanding of learners with autism.	0	0	5	10
c) This training has given me practical approaches to develop positive changes in my organisation.	0	0	5	10
d) It has made me keen to use the AET Post-16 Autism Standards to reflect on and develop practice with learners with autism in my organisation.	0	0	7	8
e) I would recommend this training to other people working in similar Post-16 settings.	0	0	5	10

N = 15.

In an encouraging sign for the potential market for this Post-16 Tier 3 AET training, Table 11.17 also shows that **all 15 delegates would recommend it to others** working in similar Post-16 settings.

11.3.4 Evaluation data from the Tier 3 pre- and post-training questionnaires

Before the delivery of the Tier 3 training, all participants were asked to self-assess their knowledge and understanding in relation to:

- Leading organisational practice in relation to individuals with autism
- Building personal and professional relationships
- Using the curriculum to support meaningful outcomes for adult life
- Enabling participation of learners with autism.

In each case, there were four or five statements to which participants responded on a scale of 1 ('strongly disagree') to 4 ('strongly agree'). After the training, participants were asked to complete the same self-assessment, having previously handed in the pre-course questionnaire. The only difference was that, after the training, the statements began with, 'because of this training course' and included an intensifier such as 'more' or 'wider'.

11.3.5 Self-assessed understanding about leading organisational practice in relation to individuals with autism

Table 11.18 shows that, for each statement, **all the participants** self-reported **increased** understanding about autism leading organisational practice in relation to individuals with autism.

Table 11.18 Understanding about leading organisational practice in relation to individuals with autism (post-training)

Statements After this training course … :	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	Strongly Agree 4
1a. … I understand **more** about the implications for practice of the four key areas of difference that learners with autism may have.	0	0	5	10
1b. … I aim to ensure that **all** staff working with learner with autism attend autism-specific training appropriate to their role.	0	0	6	9

	1	2	3	4
1c. … I know **more** about effective ways in which staff in my organisation can find out strengths, challenges and stresses for each learner with autism.	0	0	8	7
1d. … I know **more** about how to ensure that strategies are in place to safeguard learners with autism in relation to vulnerability to stress and bullying.	0	1	7	7
1e. … I know more about how to support staff to work closely with each learner with autism and his/her family to develop appropriate support strategies for that young person.	0	1	6	8

N = 15.

11.3.6 Self-assessed understanding of how to support colleagues to support learners with autism to build professional and personal relationships

Table 11.19 shows that, for each statement, **almost all participant's** self-reported **increased** understanding of how to support colleagues to support learners with autism to build personal and professional relationships.

Table 11.19   Building personal and professional relationships (post-training)

Statements **After this training course … :**	Strongly Disagree **1**	**2**	**3**	Strongly Agree **4**
2a. … I am **more** able to support colleagues to use a range of ways to gain the views of learners with autism.	0	0	10	5
2b. … I am **more** able to support colleagues to use person centred approaches to enable effective	0	0	10	5

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
planning for transition to adult life for learners with autism.				
2c. … I know **more** about how to support colleagues to provide autism-specific support to learners with autism in their peer relationships, including around relationship development and sexuality.	0	2	7	6
2d … I know **more** about how to support colleagues to practice effective strategies to raise peer awareness of the needs and strengths of learners.	0	0	9	6

N = 15.

11.3.7 Self-assessed understanding of using the curriculum to support meaningful outcomes for adult life

Table 11.20 shows that, for each statement, **almost all participants** self-reported **increased** understanding of how to support meaningful outcomes for adult life for learners with autism.

Table 11.20   Understanding of how to support meaningful outcomes for adult life for learners with autism (post-training)

Statements **After this training course … :**	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	Strongly Agree 4
3a. … I know **more** about how to ensure all study programmes for learners with autism address their aspirations for adult life.	0	1	9	5
3b. … I know **more** likely to ensure that all study programmes for each learner with autism is delivered in a range of external settings, reflecting adult environments in which the young person with autism aims to participate.	0	2	5	8

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
3c. … I am more likely to expect colleagues to collect data to measure success in maximising the independence of our learners with autism.	0	2	6	7
3d … I know **more** strategies through which my organisation can support learners with autism.	0	1	6	8

N -15.

11.3.8 Self-assessed understanding of how to enable participation of learners with autism

Table 11.21 shows that, for each statement, **almost all participants** self-reported **increased** understanding of how to enable participation of learners with autism.

Table 11.21   Understanding of how to enable participation of learners with autism (post-training) (%)

Statements **After this training course … :**	Strongly Disagree 1	 2	 3	Strongly Agree 4
4a. … I am **more** likely to ensure that my colleagues understand the possible causes of challenging behaviour.	0	1	5	9
4b. … I know **more** about how to support staff to adapt their communication style to suit individual learners with autism.	0	1	8	6
4c. … I know **more** about how to use a sensory audit tool to learn what needs to be adapted to support each young person with autism.	0	1	9	5
4d … I know **more** about how to modify the environment in my setting to support the needs of learners with autism.	0	2	8	5

N =15.

11.3.9 Overview

The findings reported here indicate that the Post-16 Tier 3 training, 'Making Sense of Autism: For Managers, was highly effective in improving delegates knowledge and understanding in four key areas: leading organisational practice in relation to individuals with autism; supporting learners to build personal and professional relationships; using the curriculum to support meaningful outcomes for adult life; and enabling participation of learners with autism.

11.3.10 Putting the training into practice

The training delegates were asked to write down two changes – one they could do quickly and one that might take longer, based on what they had learned during the training.

Changes planned as soon as possible

All 15 delegates wrote down one change they planned to make as soon as possible, based on the training.

Changes planned over a longer period

Fourteen of the fifteen delegates wrote down a change they'd like to achieve over a longer period of time, based on the training.

The fact that the delegates took time at the end of the training to specify immediate and longer term changes they'd like to make, based on the training, is a strong indication that it promoted genuine reflection on practice and created a desire to change practice to better support learners with autism.

12 Conclusions

The AET Programme continued to build upon the success of the earlier phases of the 2013-15 Programme, and the 2011-13 Programme. The AET has established a strong, effective model for the roll-out of its well-received and highly regarded training. The materials, the training method, and the hubs delivery model are all successful. The materials provide a flexible set of resources that enable experienced trainers to deliver high quality training to Early Years, School, and Post-16 staff involved in the provision of education and support for children and young people with autism. The AET has adopted a flexible approach to materials development, and training, with, for example, changes being made to Tiers 2 and 3 of the Post-16 Programme. The AET model provides a national, English, framework that allows effective regional and local delivery, enabling hubs to take advantage of local knowledge and expertise. Future challenges for the Programme are related to ensuring that learning is embedded and sustained in all settings, and that settings are empowered to support their own autism training, learning and provision. The AET Programme is a work in progress, as is the evaluation of the development and roll-out of the Programme. Future evaluation could usefully shift its focus from materials development, structures and roll-out, to further establishing the outcomes and impact for children, young people, their parents and carers.

Appendix 1: AET Programme 2013-15. Leads survey

AET Programme 2013-15. Leads survey.

1. How aware would you say you are of the AET training for school staff:		
Very aware	Aware	Not Aware
2. How aware would you say you are of the AET to training for Early Years settings' staff:		
Very aware	Aware	Not Aware
3 How aware would you say you are of the AET to training for Post-16 settings' staff:		
Very aware	Aware	Not aware
4. Have you had any role in informing Early Years settings, schools, colleges, or other settings about the AET programmes? Yes……………………………….. No……………………………… (If 'yes', go to question 5; if 'no', go to question 6).		
5. Could you please briefly outline the ways in which you have made settings aware of the AET programmes:		

6. Do you have any evidence of the numbers of settings that have undertaken AET programme training in your Local Authority?

Yes……………………………No…………………………………..

(If 'yes', go to question 7, if 'no', go to question 8)

7. As far as you are aware, how many settings have undertaken AET training in your LA:

…………………………………………………………………………

8. How aware would you say you are of the AET National Standards

Very Aware	Aware	Not Aware

9. How are would you are of the AET Competency Frameworks?

Very Aware	Aware	Not Aware

10. Have you had any role in informing nurseries, schools, colleges, or other settings about the AET National Standards and/or Competency Frameworks?

Yes………………………….. No………………………………

(If 'yes', go to question 11; if 'no', go to question 12).

11. Could you please briefly outline the ways in which you have made settings aware of the AET National Standards and Competency Frameworks:
12. Have you incorporated the AET National Standards and/or Competency Frameworks into your own work with settings? Yes………………………….. No……………………………… If 'yes', could you please explain briefly how this has been done:
13. Do you have any other comments with regard to the AET training programmes that you would like to bring to the attention of the evaluation. If so, please add below:

Appendix 1: P-16 and EY AET training delegate questionnaires, all tiers

Making Sense of Autism Training — Self-evaluation Questionnaire

Date of Training	Hub	Location of training

- You can **choose** whether or not to answer the questions – if you do answer them, it will help the AET to make any changes to the training that are needed.

- Your answers are **anonymous**.

1.   Your views of the training

(On a scale of 1 to 5, please tick one box in each row to show how much you agree or disagree with each statement.)	Strongly 1	2	3	4	Strongly 5
a) It was worthwhile.					
b) It has increased my knowledge about autism.					
c) It has increased my awareness of the differences that young children with autism may experience.					
d) It will help me to be more understanding of the types of individual differences I need to flag up.					

e) It has made me aware of at least one positive change I/we could make relatively easily to benefit young children who are, or may be, on the autism spectrum.					
f) It has confirmed that what I/we already do in our Early Years setting fits in with current thinking on good practice.					
g) It made me aware of where to find out more about autism.					
h) It made me interested in further training about autism.					

2.　　　I have experience of teaching/working with one or more children on the autism spectrum.

(*please tick one box*):　　　　　　　No ☐　　　　　　Yes ☐

3.　　I have previously received training on understanding autism (*please tick one box*).

None ☐　　　Short session ☐　　1 day ☐　　2 days ☐　　More than 2 days ☐

Please turn over

4.　　Making a difference
Please think about **your role in your Early Years setting**, and about what you have heard and learned in the training session. Please tell us about **at least one positive change you plan to make** to better support young children in that setting who are, or may be, on the autism spectrum, **or** about why you think you will **not** be making any such changes.

5.　　Open comments
Please add **any additional thoughts or comments** about today's training session:

6.   About you

We ask for this information because:

- It allows us to describe the sorts of people who have done this training.

- It helps us to find out for which groups of people the training works well.

6.1.   Your job (*please state*):

_____

6.2   In which LA area do you work? *(if known):_____*

6.3.   Gender (*please tick one box*):   Female ☐   Male ☐

6.4.   Education (*please tick your highest level of educational qualifications*):
None ☐   1-4 GCSEs or equivalent ☐   5 or more GCSEs or equivalent ☐
A/AS levels or equivalent ☐   Higher education below degree level ☐
University degree ☐   Other ☐_____

6.5.   Ethnicity (*please tick one box*):
White - British ☐   Other ethnic group ☐ *(please state)_____*

6.6.   Age (*please tick one box*):
16-19 ☐   20-29 ☐   30-39 ☐   40-49 ☐   50-59 ☐   60 or over ☐

Thank you for taking part in the evaluation! Please hand in your questionnaire

Raising Awareness Training — Self-evaluation Questionnaire

Date of Training	Hub	Location of training

- You can choose whether or not to answer the questions – if you do answer them, it will help the AET to make any changes to the training that are needed.

- Your answers are anonymous.

1.   Your views of the training

(On a scale of 1 to 5, please tick one box in each row to show how much you agree or disagree with each statement.)	Strongly 1	2	3	4	Strongly 5
a) It was worthwhile.					
b) It has increased my knowledge about autism.					
c) It has increased my awareness of the differences that learners with autism may experience.					
d) It will help me to be more understanding of learners with autism.					
e) It has made me aware of at least one positive change I/we could make relatively easily to benefit learners with autism.					
f) It has confirmed that what I/we already do in our post-16 setting fits in with current thinking.					
g) It made me aware of where to find out more about autism.					
h) It made me interested in further training about autism.					

2. I have experience of teaching/working with one or more learners on the autism spectrum.

(*please tick one box*): No ☐ Yes ☐

3. I have previously received training on understanding autism (*please tick one box*).

None ☐ Short session ☐ 1 day ☐ 2 days ☐ More than 2 days ☐

Please turn over

4. Making a difference

Please think about **your role in your college/post-16 setting**, and about what you have heard and learned in the training session. Please tell us about **at least one positive change you plan to make** to better support young people with autism in that setting **or** about why you think you will **not** be making any such changes.

5. Open comments

Please add **any additional thoughts or comments** about today's training session:

6. About you

We ask for this information because:

- It allows us to describe the sorts of people who have done this training.

> - It helps us to find out for which groups of people the training works well.

6.1.   Your job (*please state*):

_____

6.2   In which LA area do you work? *(if known):_____*

6.3.   Gender (*please tick one box*):   Female ☐   Male ☐

6.4.   Education (*please tick your highest level of educational qualifications*):
None ☐   1-4 GCSEs or equivalent ☐   5 or more GCSEs or equivalent ☐
A/AS levels or equivalent ☐   Higher education below degree level ☐
University degree ☐   Other ☐_____

6.5.   Ethnicity (*please tick one box*):
White - British ☐   Other ethnic group ☐ *(please state)_____*

6.6.   Age (*please tick one box*):
16-19 ☐   20-29 ☐   30-39 ☐   40-49 ☐   50-59 ☐   60 or over ☐

Thank you for taking part in the evaluation! Please hand in your questionnaire

Tier 2 Pre-training self-evaluation questionnaire

Date of Training	Hub	Location of Training

- The AET has asked researchers from the University of Warwick to find out what people think of this training.

- You can **choose** whether or not to answer the questions – if you do answer them, it will help the AET to make any changes to the training that are needed.

- If you choose to answer, what you say is kept **confidential**. We ask for your name so that we can match up your answers before and after the training.

Your name (please write in capitals):

_____
_____

1. Understanding autism in relation to individuals

*Please tick one box in each row to indicate **your current level** of agreement with the statements.*	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
1a. I am able to take into account the educational challenges associated with the four key areas of				

difference that learners with autism may have.				
1b. I know of the four main theories currently used to explain the differences associated with autism.				
1c. I know how to safeguard learners with autism in relation to vulnerability to stress and bullying.				
1d. I know how to work with autistic learners to help each one to build a profile document of key information to share with relevant staff.				
1e. I can choose from a range of strategies to support appropriately a specific learner with autism.				

2. Understanding how to engage each learner with autism

*Please tick one box in each row to indicate **your current level** of agreement with the statements.*	**Strongly disagree** **1**	**Disagree** **2**	**Agree** **3**	**Strongly agree** **4**
2a. I know a range of ways to gain the views of learners with autism.				
2b. I know how to use person centered approaches to enable effective planning for transition to adult life for learners with autism.				

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
2c. I know how to support learners with autism in their peer relationships, including around relationship development and sexuality.				
2d. I know effective strategies to raise peer awareness of the needs and strengths of learners with autism.				

3. Adjusting and differentiating the curriculum for learners with autism

Please tick one box in each row to indicate your current level of agreement with the statements	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
3a. I know how to ensure study programmes for learners with autism address their aspirations for adult life.				
3b. I know several ways to use technologies to support the independence of learners with autism.				
3c. I am able to draw on a range of resources and strategies to differentiate the curriculum flexibly to suit the individual needs and interests of learners with autism.				

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
3d. I know the key components of effective practice relating to learners with autism.				

4. Enabling participation of learners with autism

*Please tick one box in each row to indicate **your current level** of agreement with the statements.*	**Strongly disagree** **1**	**Disagree** **2**	**Agree** **3**	**Strongly agree** **4**
4a. I understand the possible causes of challenging behaviour.				
4b. I know how to observe, record, analyse, de-escalate and reduce concerning behaviours.				
4c. I know how to use an effective low arousal approach in crisis situations.				
4d. I know how to modify the environment in my setting to support the needs of learners with autism.				

5. I am currently working with one or more learners on the autism spectrum.

(*please tick one box*): No ☐ Yes ☐

6. I have previously attended the AET Tier 1 training programme for Post-16 – 'Making Sense of Autism':

(*please tick one box*): No ☐ Yes ☐

7. Have you undertaken any other one day, or more, training on autism?

(*please tick one box*): No ☐ Yes ☐

Part 2 ABOUT YOU

(This information is used to describe the range of trainees & the effectiveness of the training for different groups).

8. Your setting (e.g., FE college, Sixth Form, service for post-16 learners)

(*please state*)_____

9. Local authority your setting is in:_____

Continues/…

10. Your job title:

_____

11. Gender (*please tick one box*): Female ☐ Male ☐

12. Education (*please tick your highest level of educational qualifications*):

None ☐   GCSE ☐   A/AS levels ☐

Higher education below degree level ☐   University degree ☐

Other ☐_____

13.   Ethnicity *(please state)*_____

14.   Age (*please tick one box*):

16-19 ☐   20-29☐   30-39 ☐   40-49 ☐   50-59 ☐

60 or over ☐

Please hand the questionnaire in.

Thank you for taking part in the evaluation!

Tier 2 Post-training self-evaluation questionnaire

Date of Training	Hub	Location of Training

- What you say is kept **confidential**. We ask for your name so that we can match up your answers before and after the training.

Your name (please write in capitals):

_____

PART 1   MY SELF-EVALUATION

1.   Understanding autism in relation to individuals

*Please tick one box in each row to indicate **your current level** of agreement with the statements.*	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
1. Because of this training course:				
1a. I am **more** able to take into account the educational challenges associated with the four key areas of difference that learners with autism may have.				

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
1b. I know **more** about the four main theories currently used to explain the differences associated with autism.				
1c. I know **more** about how to safeguard learners with autism in relation to vulnerability to stress and bullying.				
1d. I know **more** about how to work with autistic learners to help each one to build a profile of key information to share with relevant staff.				
1e. I can choose from a **wider** range of strategies to support appropriately a specific learner with autism.				

Continues/…

2.   Understanding how to engage each learner with autism

*Please tick one box in each row to indicate **your current level** of agreement with the statements.*	**Strongly disagree** **1**	**Disagree** **2**	**Agree** **3**	**Strongly agree** **4**
2. Because of this training course:				
2a. I know **more** ways to gain the views of learners with autism.				

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
2b. I know **more** about how to use person centered approaches to enable effective planning for transition to adult life for learners with autism.				
2c. I know **more** about how to support learners with autism in their peer relationships, including around relationship development and sexuality.				
2d. I know **more** about effective strategies to raise peer awareness of the needs and strengths of learners with autism.				

3. Adjusting and differentiating the curriculum for learners with autism

*Please tick one box in each row to indicate **your current level** of agreement with the statements*	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
3. Because of this training course:				
3a. I know **more** about how to ensure study programmes for learners with autism address their aspirations for adult life.				
3b. I know **more** ways to use technologies to support the independence of learners with autism.				

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
3c. I am able to draw on a **wider** range of resources and strategies to differentiate the curriculum flexibly to suit the individual needs and interests of learners with autism.				
3d. I know **more** about the key components of effective practice relating to learners with autism.				

4.   Enabling participation of learners with autism

*Please tick one box in each row to indicate **your current level** of agreement with the statements.*	**Strongly disagree** **1**	**Disagree** **2**	**Agree** **3**	**Strongly agree** **4**
4. Because of this training course:				
4a. I understand the possible causes of challenging behaviour.				
4b. I know how to observe, record, analyse, de-escalate and reduce concerning behaviours.				
4c. I know how to use an effective low arousal approach in crisis situations.				
4d. I know how to modify the environment in my setting to support the needs of learners with autism.				

PART 2   MY VIEWS OF THIS COURSE

5. Views of the course

Please tick one box in each row to indicate **your current level** of agreement with the statements.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
5a) I found this training worthwhile.				
5b) It will help me to be more understanding of learners with autism.				
5c) It has given me practical approaches to use in my setting.				
5d) It made me keen to use the AET Post-16 Competency Framework to reflect on and develop my practice with learners with autism.				
5e) I would recommend this training to other people working in similar settings.				

PART 3   PUTTING MY TRAINING INTO PRACTICE

6.   Please write down two changes - **(a)** one that you can do quickly and **(b)** one   that may take longer - that you plan to make **because of what you have   learned during this training OR (c)** tell us why you will not be making changes.

6a) A change I plan to make as soon as I can:	**6b)** A change I'd like to achieve over a longer period:

OR 6c) I have <u>no plans</u> to make any changes because:

_____

_____

_____

_____

7.   We would like to find out more about what, if any, impact this training has on   practice and on the quality of life for learners with autism. If you are willing for   us to contact you for this follow-up purpose **please provide your contact details.**   This does not commit you to anything except us contacting you in   autumn   2014/spring 2015.

    Work tel:

_____

    Work e-mail:

_____

8.   Additional AET training, for people with leadership roles in Post-16 settings has been developed. Please answer the following questions in relation to further   training:

8a) I train or lead other staff in my setting.　　　　　Yes ☐

　　No ☐

8b) I would be interested in attending additional AET training relating to

leading/training other staff in my setting to support learners with autism:

Yes ☐　　　　　　Possibly ☐　　　　　　No ☐

Please hand the questionnaire in. Thank you for taking part in the evaluation!

Tier 2 Pre-training self-evaluation questionnaire

Date of Training	Hub	Location of Training

- The AET has asked researchers from the University of Warwick to find out what people think of this training.

- You can **choose** whether or not to answer the questions – if you do answer them, it will help the AET to make any changes to the training that are needed.

- If you choose to answer, what you say is kept **confidential**. We ask for your name so that we can match up your answers before and after the training.

Your name (please write in capitals):

_____

1.   My knowledge and understanding of autism

Please tick one box in each row to indicate your current level of agreement with the statements.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
1a. I am aware of the four key areas of difference that children with autism may have.				
1b. I am aware of the individual needs of children with autism in my setting.				
1c. I am aware of any other needs & conditions that the children with autism in my setting may have.				

2. My knowledge and understanding of partnership working

Please tick one box in each row to indicate your current level of agreement with the statements.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
2a. I know a range of services, advice or support that can be accessed to help me support children with autism.				
2b. I am aware of the importance of working with others to support children with autism.				
2c. I know how to support children with autism in their peer relationships.				

3. My knowledge & understanding of enabling environments for children with autism

Please tick one box in each row to indicate your current level of agreement with the statements.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
3a. I know how physical environment in my setting might affect a child with autism.				
3b. I know how to use visual aids to support children with autism.				
3c. I know how to adapt my style of interaction to suit individual children with autism.				

4. My knowledge & understanding of learning & development of children with autism

Please tick one box in each row to indicate your current level of agreement with the statements.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4

4a. I know how to monitor progress & set goals for the children with autism in my setting.				
4b. I know that children with autism might have differences in understanding information.				
4c. I am aware of any differences in feeding, sleeping & toileting affecting children with autism in my setting.				

5.   I am currently working with one or more pupils on the autism spectrum.

(*please tick one box*):   No ☐   Yes ☐

6.   I have previously attended the AET Tier 1 training programme for Early Years – 'Making Sense of Autism':

(*please tick one box*):   No ☐   Yes ☐

7.   Have you undertaken any other one day, or more, training on autism?*:*

      (*please tick one box*):   No ☐   Yes ☐

Part 2 ABOUT YOU

(This information is used to describe the range of trainees & to analyse the effectiveness of the training for different groups).

8.   Your setting (e.g., nursery, child minder, children's centre)

(*please state*)_____

9. Local authority where your setting is:

_____

10.   Your job title:

_____

11.   Gender (*please tick one box*):   Female ☐   Male ☐

12.   Education (*please tick your highest level of educational qualifications*):

None ☐   GCSE ☐   A/AS levels ☐

Higher education below degree level ☐   University degree ☐

Other ☐_____

13.   Ethnicity (*please state*)_____

14.   Age (*please tick one box*):

16-19 ☐   20-29☐   30-39 ☐   40-49 ☐   50-59 ☐

60 or over ☐

Please hand the questionnaire in.

Thank you for taking part in the evaluation!

Tier 2 Post-training self-evaluation questionnaire

Date of Training		Hub		Location of Training

- What you say is kept **confidential**. We ask for your name only so that we can match up your answers before and after the training.

Your name (please write in capitals):

_____

1.   My knowledge and understanding of autism

Please tick one box in each row to indicate your current level of agreement with the statements.	Strong disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
1a. I am **more** aware of the four key areas of difference that children with autism may have.				
1b. I am **more** aware of the individual needs of children with autism in my setting				
1c. I am **more** aware of any other needs & conditions that the children with autism in my setting may have.				

Continued/…

2. My knowledge and understanding of partnership working

Please tick one box in each row to indicate your current level of agreement with the statements.	**Strongly disagree** **1**	**Disagree** **2**	**Agree** **3**	**Strongly agree** **4**
2a. I know **more about** services, advice or support that can be accessed to help me support children with autism.				
2b. I am **more** aware of the importance of working with others to support children with autism.				
2c. I know how to support children with autism in their peer relationships.				

3. My knowledge & understanding of enabling environments for children with autism

Please tick one box in each row to indicate your current level of agreement with the statements.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
3a. I know **more about** how the setting's physical environment might affect a child with autism.				
3b. I know **more about** how to use visual aids to support children with autism.				
3c. I know **more about** how to adapt my interaction style to suit individual children with autism.				

4. My knowledge & understanding of learning & development of children with autism

Please tick one box in each row to indicate your current level of agreement with the statements.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
4a. I know **more about** how to monitor progress & set goals for the children with autism in my setting.				
4b. I know **more about** how children with autism might have differences in understanding information.				
4c. I am **more** aware of any differences in feeding, sleeping & toileting affecting children with autism in my setting.				

5. Your views of the training

Please tick one box in each row to show how much you agree or disagree with each statement	**Strongly disagree** **1**	**Disagree** **2**	**Agree** **3**	**Strongly Agree** **4**
5a. I found this training worthwhile.				
5b. This training has increased my knowledge about autism.				
5c. This training has given me information and practical ideas that I will be able to use in my setting.				
5d. I would recommend this training to other people working in similar settings.				

PART 3   PUTTING MY TRAINING INTO PRACTICE

6.   Please write down two changes - **(a)** one that you can do quickly and **(b)** one   that may take longer - that you plan to make **because of what you have   learned during this training OR (c)** tell us why you will not be making

changes.

6a) A change I plan to make as soon as I can:	**6b**) A change I'd like to achieve over a longer period:

OR 6c) I have <u>no plans</u> to make any changes because:

_____

_____

_____

7. Additional AET training, for people with leadership roles in EY settings has been developed. Please answer the following questions in relation to further training:

7a) I train or lead other staff in my setting. Yes ☐ No ☐

7b) I would be interested in attending additional AET training (Tier 3) relating to leading/training other staff in my setting to support children with autism:

Yes ☐ Possibly ☐ No ☐

8. We would like to find out more about what, if any, impact this training has on practice and on the quality of life for children with autism. If you are willing for us to contact you for this follow-up purpose **please provide your contact details**. This does not commit you to anything except us contacting you in autumn 2014/spring 2015.

Work tel:

_____

Work e-mail:

_____

Please hand the questionnaire in. Thank you for taking part in the evaluation!

Tier 3 Pre-training self-evaluation questionnaire

Date of Training	**Hub**	**Location of Training**

> - The AET has asked researchers from the University of Warwick to find out what people think of this training.
>
> - You can **choose** whether or not to answer the questions – if you do answer them, it will help the AET to make any changes to the training that are needed.
>
> - If you choose to answer, what you say is kept **confidential**. We ask for your name so that we can match up your answers before and after the training.

Your name (please write in capitals):

_____
_____

1. My knowledge and understanding of the frameworks for good practice

Please tick one box in each row to indicate ***your current level*** *of knowledge & understanding*	**Not aware** **1**	**Aware of**	**Looked at briefly** **3**	**Considered in relation to my setting** **4**

		2		
1a. I am aware of the AET Early Years National Autism Standards.				
1b. I am aware of the SEND Code of Practice (2014) in respect of autism education.				
1c. I am aware of the relevance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to good autism practice.				
1d. I am aware of the relevance of the Children & Families Act (2014) to good autism practice.				
1e. I am aware of obligations of settings in relation to children with autism under the Equality Act (2010).				

2. My knowledge of how to support staff in my setting to develop good autism practice

Please tick one box in each row to indicate your current level of knowledge & understanding	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
2a. I enable staff to observe and assess children in my setting.				
2b. I ensure my staff know of different ways to record children's progress.				

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
2c. I ensure that practitioners in my setting know their role (with guidance & support) in the process of identifying children with autism.				

3. My knowledge of how to provide staff with tools to develop their own provision

Please tick one box in each row to indicate your current level of knowledge & understanding	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
3a. I emphasise to staff the importance of working with the parents/carers of children with autism to improve outcomes for children.				
3b. I ensure that practitioners in my setting know a range of ways to evaluate the learning of children with autism.				
3c. I ensure that staff know the questions to ask to evaluate specific approaches for children with autism.				
3d. I ensure staff understand the implications for practice in our setting of the four key areas of difference children with autism may have.				

4. Staff in my setting currently work with one or more pupils on the autism spectrum.

(*please tick one box*): No ☐ Yes ☐

5. I have previously attended the AET training programme for Early Years – '*Good autism practice*':

(*please tick one box*): No ☐ Yes ☐

6. Have you undertaken any other one day, or more, training on autism?*:*

(*please tick one box*): No ☐ Yes ☐

Part 2 ABOUT YOU

(This information is used to describe the range of trainees & to analyse the effectiveness of the training for different groups).

7. Your setting (e.g., nursery, child minder, children's centre)

(*please state*)_____

8. Local authority where your setting is:_____

9. Your job title:

_____

10. Gender (*please tick one box*): Female ☐ Male ☐

11. Education (*please tick your highest level of educational qualifications*):

None ☐   GCSE ☐   A/AS levels ☐

Higher education below degree level ☐   University degree ☐

Other ☐_____

12.   Ethnicity *(please state)*:_____

13.   Age (*please tick one box*):

16-19 ☐   20-29☐   30-39 ☐   40-49 ☐   50-59 ☐

60 or over ☐

Please hand the questionnaire in. Thank you for taking part in the evaluation!

Tier 3 Post-training self-evaluation questionnaire

Date of Training	Hub	Location of Training

- What you say is kept **confidential**. We ask for your name only so that we can match up your answers before and after the training.

Your name (please write in capitals):

1.   My awareness of the frameworks for good practice

Please tick one box in each row to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
1. Because of this training course:				
1a. I am **more** aware of the AET Early Years National Autism Standards.				
1b. I am **more** aware of the SEND Code of Practice (2014) in respect of autism education.				

1c. I am **more** aware of the relevance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to good autism practice.				
1d. I am **more** aware of the relevance of the Children & Families Act (2014) to good autism practice.				
1e. I am **more** aware of obligations of settings in relation to children with autism under the Equality Act (2010).				

2. My knowledge of how to support for staff in developing good autism practice

Please tick one box in each row to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
2. Because of this training course, I am *more likely* to:				
2a. ensure staff in my setting observe and assess children.				

2b. ensure staff know of different systems for recording children's progress.				
2c. ensure that practitioners in my setting know their role in the process of identifying children with autism.				

3. My knowledge of how to provide staff with tools to develop their own provision

Please tick one box in each row to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
3. Because of this training, I am _more likely_ to:				
3a. emphasise to staff the importance of working with the parents/carers of children with autism to improve outcomes.				
3b. ensure that practitioners in my setting know a range of ways to evaluate the learning of children with autism				
3c. ensure that staff know the questions to ask in order to evaluate specific approaches for children with autism.				
3d. ensure staff understand the implications for practice in our setting of the four key areas of difference children with autism may have.				

4. My views of this course

Please tick one box in each row to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
4a) I found this training worthwhile.				
4b) It will help me to promote more understanding of children with autism.				
4c) It has given me practical approaches to develop positive changes in my setting.				
4d) It made me keen to use the AET Early Years National Standards to reflect on and develop autism practice in my setting.				
4e) I would recommend this training to other people working in similar Early Years settings.				

5. Please state here what else, if anything, you would have liked in this training:

(Continue overleaf if necessary)

6. We would like to find out more about what, if any, impact this training has on Early Years practice and on the quality of life for children with autism. If you are willing for us to contact you for this follow-up purpose **please provide your contact details**. This does not commit you to anything except us contacting you in autumn 2014/spring 2015.

Work tel.:

_____

Work e-mail:

_____

Please hand the questionnaire in. Thank you for taking part in the evaluation!

5. (Ctd: *Please state here what else, if anything, you would have liked in this training:*

Tier 3 Pre-training self-evaluation questionnaire

Date of Training	Birmingham P16	Location of Training

- The AET has asked researchers from the University of Warwick to find out what people think of this training.

- You can **choose** whether or not to answer the questions – if you do answer them, it will help the AET to make any changes to the training that are needed.

- If you choose to answer, what you say is kept **confidential**. We ask for your name so that we can match up your answers before and after the training.

Your name (please write in capitals):

_____
_____

1.   Leading organisational practice in relation to individuals with autism

Please tick one box in each row to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
1a. I understand the implications, for practice in my organisation, of the four key areas of difference that learners with autism may have.				

1b. I aim to ensure that **all** staff working with learners with autism attend autism-specific training to develop appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills.				
1c. I know effective ways in which staff in my organisation can find out about strengths, challenges and stresses for each learner with autism.				
1d. I know how to ensure that strategies are in place to safeguard learners with autism in relation to vulnerability to stress and bullying.				
1e. I know how to support staff to work closely with each learner with autism and his/her family to develop appropriate support strategies for that young person.				

2. Building professional and personal relationships

Please tick one box in each row to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.	**Strongly disagree** **1**	**Disagree** **2**	**Agree** **3**	**Strongly agree** **4**
2a. I am able to support colleagues to use a range of ways to gain the views of learners with autism.				
2b. I am able to support colleagues to use person centered approaches to enable				

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	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
effective planning for transition to adult life for learners with autism.				
2c. I know how to support colleagues to provide autism-specific support to learners with autism in their peer relationships, including around developing relationships and sexuality.				
2d. I know how to support colleagues to practice effective strategies to raise peer awareness of the needs and strengths of learners with autism.				

3. Using the curriculum to support meaningful life outcomes

Please tick one box in each row to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.	**Strongly disagree** **1**	**Disagree** **2**	**Agree** **3**	**Strongly agree** **4**
3a. I know how to ensure that all study programmes for learners with autism address their aspirations for adult life.				
3b. I ensure that the curriculum for each learner with autism is delivered in a range of external settings, reflecting adult environments in which the young person with autism aims to participate.				

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
3c. I expect colleagues to collect data to measure success in maximizing the independence of our learners with autism.				

Please tick one box in each row to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
3d. I know a number of key strategies through which my organisation can support learners with autism.				

4.   Enabling participation of learners with autism

Please tick one box in each row to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
4a. I ensure that my colleagues understand the possible causes of challenging behaviour.				
4b. I know how to support staff to adapt their communication style to suit individual learners with autism.				

4c. I know how to use a sensory audit tool to learn what needs to be adapted to support young people with autism.				
4d. I know how to modify the environment in my setting to support the needs of learners with autism.				

5. I have a leadership role that includes responsibility for developing provision for learners with autism in a post-16 setting.

(*please tick one box*): No ☐ Yes ☐

6. I have previously attended the AET Tier 2 training programme for Post-16 – '**Making Sense of Autism – for practitioners'**:

(*please tick one box*): No ☐ Yes ☐

7. Have you undertaken any other one day, or more, training on autism?

(*please tick one box*): No ☐ Yes ☐

Part 2 ABOUT YOU

(This information is used to describe the range of trainees & the effectiveness of the training for different groups).

8. **Your setting (e.g., FE college, Sixth Form, service for post-16 learners)**

(*please state*)_____

9.   Local authority where your setting is:_____

10.   Your job title:

_____

11.   Gender (*please tick one box*):   Female ☐   Male ☐

12.   Education (*please tick your highest level of educational qualifications*):

None ☐   GCSE ☐   A/AS levels ☐

Higher education below degree level ☐   University degree ☐

Other ☐_____

13.   Ethnicity (*please state*)_____

14.   Age (*please tick one box*):

16-19 ☐   20-29☐   30-39 ☐   40-49 ☐   50-59 ☐

60 or over ☐

Please hand the questionnaire in. Thank you for taking part in the evaluation!

Tier 3 Post-training self-evaluation questionnaire

Date of Training	Hub	Location of Training:

- What you write is kept **confidential**. We ask for your name so that we can match up your answers before and after the training.

Your name (please write in capitals):

PART 1   MY SELF-EVALUATION

1.   Leading organisational practice in relation to individuals with autism

Please tick one box in each row to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Because of this training course:				
1a. I understand **more** about the implications for practice of the four key areas of difference that learners with autism may have.				
1b. I aim to ensure that **all** staff working with learners with autism attend autism-specific training appropriate to their role.				

1c. I know **more about** effective ways in which staff in my organisation can find out about strengths, challenges and stresses for each learner with autism.				
1d. I know **more about** how to ensure that strategies are in place to safeguard learners with autism in relation to vulnerability to stress and bullying.				
1e. I know **more about** how to support staff to work closely with each learner with autism and his/her family to develop appropriate support strategies for that young person.				

Continued/…

2. Building professional and personal relationship

Please tick one box in each row to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly
	1	2	3	4
2. Because of this training course:				
2a. I am **more** able to support colleagues to use a range of ways to gain the views of learners with autism.				
2b. I am **more** able to support colleagues to use person centered approaches to enable effective planning for transition to adult life for learners with autism.				

2c. I know **more about** how to support colleagues to provide autism-specific support to learners with autism in their peer relationships, including around developing relationships and sexuality.				
2d. I know **more about** how to support colleagues to practice effective strategies to raise peer awareness of the needs and strengths of learners with autism.				

3.   Using the curriculum to support meaningful life outcomes

Please tick one box in each row to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly
	1	2	3	4
3. Because of this training course:				
3a. I know **more about** how to ensure that all study programmes for learners with autism address their aspirations for adult life.				
3b. I am **more likely to** ensure that the curriculum for each learner with autism is delivered in a range of external settings, reflecting adult environments in which the young person with autism aims to participate.				
3c. I am **more likely to** expect colleagues to collect data to measure success in maximizing the independence of our learners with autism.				
3d. I know **more** strategies through which my organisation can support learners with autism.				

4. Enabling participation of learners with autism

Please tick one box in each row to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
4a. I am **more likely to** ensure that my colleagues understand the possible causes of challenging behaviour.				
4b. I know **more about** how to support staff to adapt their communication style to suit individual learners with autism.				
4c. I know **more about** how to use a sensory audit tool to learn what needs to be adapted to support each young people with autism.				
4d. I know **more about** how to modify the environment in my setting to support the needs of learners with autism.				

PART 2   MY VIEWS OF THIS COURSE

5. Views of the course

Please tick one box in each row to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
5a) I found this training worthwhile.				
5b) It will help me to promote more understanding of learners with autism.				
5c) It has given me practical approaches to develop positive changes in my organisation.				

5d) It made me keen to use the AET Post-16 Autism Standards to reflect on and develop practice with learners with autism in my organisation.				
5e) I would recommend this training to other people working in similar Post-16 settings.				

PART 3   **PUTTING MY TRAINING INTO PRACTICE**

6.   Please write down two changes - **(a)** one that you can do quickly and
(b) one   that may take longer - that you plan to make **because of what
you have   learned during this training OR (c)** tell us why you will not be
making changes.

6a) A change I plan to make as soon as I can:	**6b)** A change I'd like to achieve over a longer period:

OR 6c) I have <u>no plans</u> to make any changes because:

_____

_____

_____

_____

7.   We would like to find out more about what, if any, impact this training
has on practice and on the quality of life for learners with autism. If you are
willing for us to contact you for this follow-up purpose **please provide your
contact details.** This does not commit you to anything except us contacting
you in autumn 2014/spring 2015.

        Work tel:

_____

Work e-mail:

_____

Please hand the questionnaire in. Thank you for taking part in the evaluation!