

ABOUT EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LTD (ESPA)

ESPA is a specialist Charity with 27 years' experience of supporting people on the autism spectrum to enjoy rewarding and fulfilling lives. We support over 240 people in a wide range of person centred services including:

- Independent Specialist Further Education College
- Residential services
- Independent Supported Living
- Domiciliary support
- Floating support
- Community enablement
- Transition services
- Day opportunities
- University support programme
- Vocational Traineeship

In addition to being on the autism spectrum, almost everyone we support has additional or associated complex and challenging needs that include: borderline to severe learning difficulties; a wide range of mental health conditions e.g. OCD, Anxiety, Depression, Bi-Polar, ADHD, Self-Harm, Eating Disorders, Personality Disorder, Attachment Disorder; severely challenging and high risk behaviours; physical disabilities; epilepsy; communication and sensory difficulties and some who have or are at high risk of offending.

We pride ourselves in our commitment to each person despite their challenges. The specialist skills and interventions we employ and our structured autism specific approaches have enabled the individuals we support to achieve some excellent outcomes, increase independence, enjoy a good quality of life and live safely and happily in their community.

All our support and interventions are outcome focussed and we work extremely hard to enable people to make informed choices and decisions and remain in control of their life, support and education.

As a regional Specialist Charity our reputation has earned us the position of being a preferred provider for some of the most challenging individuals known to Local Authorities. We consistently receive excellent feedback from individuals themselves, families and carers and the extensive range of partners we work with. They particularly commend us on our specialist skills and expertise, our confidence and creative approaches to supporting people with complex and challenging needs, the quality of our relationships, our professionalism, our understanding of autism and our non-aversive and low arousal approaches to managing behaviours that challenge.

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) and Positive Risk Management underpin all our support planning and interventions to ensure we achieve a balance between promoting independence and keeping people safe.

We believe delivering high quality, consistent and responsive person centred autism specific care and support is inextricably linked to the quality of our staff, their values, principles, skills, knowledge, confidence, resilience and competencies. We achieve this through heavily investing in staff training, from a 3 week taught Induction programme and ongoing CPD and staff support systems.

Our low turnover has enabled us to attract and retain a highly skilled and committed workforce that affords individuals with consistency of support and relationships. This is reinforced through staff surveys where staff consistently report high levels of job satisfaction and feel well trained and supported in their roles. We also ensure all staff receive the practical and emotional support they need including supervision, mentoring, de-briefing and Counselling to support them in their challenging roles.

Everything we do starts by us really getting to know a person. Partnership and integrated working harnesses the knowledge and expertise of everyone in a person's life, especially families and carers enabling us to design and deliver support tailored to the person's actual needs and preferences. This is especially important for people who have complex needs or present with challenges to ensure we get things right from the outset. We know it is down to the minute details that can make a transition or placement successful and minimise any upset or anxieties that could negatively impact on behaviour and relationships. We also ensure we create the right living and learning environments to ensure they are autism specific, minimise the impact of any sensory sensitivities, where behaviours can be managed safely and affording individuals with the dignity and personal space they may need at times of high anxiety.

To enable us to really get to know the person, design their support and learning, ensure they remain at the heart of everything we do and to facilitate the setting of realistic goals and expected outcomes we use a wide variety of tools, interventions and specialist approaches. These include Pre-Assessment Questionnaires, Capacity Check List, Equality and Diversity Profiles, Behaviour, Communication and Sensory Profiles, Health Action Plans, Risk Assessments, Functional Skills Audits and the Spectrum Star.

Our skills and expertise is enhanced through the support of our Multi-Disciplinary Team who offer specialist training to staff and teams. We use specialist, autism specific approaches including Structured Teaching (TEACCH), Training in Systematic Instruction, use of visuals, signing and task analysis to provide structured support that enables individuals to achieve their desired goals and promote learning and independence.