



Education Support Service

Outline of ASD Learning Action Groups for teachers and other school staff

The Learning Action Group (LAG) model has been developed as a cost-effective way for schools to develop their provision and inclusive practice for pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). We work with both local authority and independent sectors.

LAGs are set up for groups of either mainstream primary, mainstream secondary or SEN schools. This is due to the requirements of each of these settings being specific to the abilities/ needs and age groups of its pupils. LAGs are run locally and historically participating schools take turns to host the workshops.

The LAGs address relevant topics and issues relating to ASD and offer practical support through advice, bespoke training and interaction with other professionals within the group experiencing similar challenges.

The Learning Action Group programme includes:

- 1 x whole day INSET

This training day aims to develop a better understanding of the Autism Spectrum and general strategies based on the NAS SPELL approach (Structure, Positive, Empathy, Low Arousal and Links). The training is tailored to enable schools to implement practical strategies within their individual setting.

Numbers are flexible depending on size of venue. Approximately 50 places for attendees are available which would be shared equally among the participating schools. I.e. if 10 schools were participating, 5 staff members from each could attend.

- 6 x Workshops

Workshops are run as after school twilight sessions, usually from 4- 6 pm. There are spaces for +/- 20 teachers (again places are divided equally among the participating schools). It is advisable for the same teachers to attend each workshop for the duration of the programme in order for working relationships and support to be developed within the group. This will also promote a cohesive understanding of the many aspects of autism.

There are 6 workshops run over a year; one each half term. The LAG does not have to begin at the start of an academic year, but will take 3 terms to complete the programme.



Education Support Service

The following topics will be addressed at LAG workshops:

Primary Mainstream:

1. Practical classroom strategies for learners with ASD in a mainstream setting
2. Positive approaches to managing challenging behaviour in learners with ASD. This will include: using motivation; teaching consequences; recognising emotions and learning calming strategies.
3. Practical strategies for developing social skills with learners with ASD, and supporting their inclusion within a peer group. This may include advice on supporting a child to understand their diagnosis.
4. Developing independence, self- help and flexibility of thought. This will include: coping with change; carrying out daily tasks independently; play skills and engaging in new activities.
5. Developing an understanding of the sensory world of children with ASD.
6. Facilitating transitions, including from Primary to Secondary school.

Secondary Mainstream:

1. Practical strategies for successful inclusion of learners with ASD in a mainstream secondary setting.
2. Positive approaches to managing challenging behaviour in learners with ASD. This will include recognising and reducing anxiety; managing obsessive and challenging behaviour; building motivation; emotion recognition and anger management; choices and consequences.
3. Practical strategies for developing social skills with learners with ASD, and supporting their inclusion within a peer group. This will include advice on supporting a young person to understand their diagnosis; relationships and friendships; specific social skills training; sex education and puberty; addressing bullying.
4. Developing flexibility of thought; independence and organisation (including work tasks and home work).
5. Developing an understanding of the sensory world of people with ASD.
6. Preparing pupils with ASD for life beyond school: making choices, self advocacy and practical life skills.



Education Support Service

SEN Learning Action Groups:

1. Autism specific classroom strategies for successful teaching and learning (based on the principles of TEACCH).
 2. Addressing the Triad: Focus on communication- practical strategies to develop functional communication throughout the school day.
 3. Addressing the Triad: Focus on social understanding- practical strategies to develop peer interaction, social understanding and basic social skills.
 4. Addressing the Triad: Focus on flexibility of thought- coping with change, developing independence, leisure skills and self-help skills
 5. Developing a better understanding of the sensory world of people with ASD.
 6. Positive approaches to managing challenging behaviour in learners with ASD. This will include recognising and reducing anxiety; managing obsessive and challenging behaviour; building motivation; calming strategies; choices and consequences.
- Full day Individual School consultation

Each school within the LAG will have a full day's consultation with the senior consultant from the Education Support Service. The purpose of the consultation is to support schools in areas they have identified for development relating to their ASD practice. Usually a consultation includes observation, meeting with relevant staff members, recognising existing good practice, identifying areas for development and making recommendations for progression. The school can decide the focus of the consultation which can include providing support/ advice for individual pupils, general ASD practice within the school and development of ASD provision.

Cost

The cost of running a LAG is divided among the schools participating therefore the cost per school is dependent on the number of schools joining the group (max 10 schools per LAG):

10 schools = £ 825 + VAT per school per annum
9 schools = £ 858 + VAT per school per annum
8 schools = £ 900 + VAT per school per annum
7 schools = £ 953 + VAT per school per annum
6 schools = £ 1025 + VAT per school per annum
5 schools = £ 1125 + VAT per school per annum
4 schools = £ 1275 + VAT per school per annum
3 schools = £ 1525 + VAT per school per annum
2 schools = £ 2025 + VAT per school per annum



Education Support Service

Setting up a LAG

There are two options to form a LAG:

1. Register your school's interest by emailing alice.stobart@nas.org.uk . In this instance you may have to wait until other schools in your area have expressed an interest.
2. Speak to schools in your confederation or cluster and email alice.stobart@nas.org.uk with a list of schools ready to form a group. This will fast track the launch of your LAG.

Independent schools may wish to invite other schools with whom they have links or contact.