

ASD SELECT COMMITTEE

Hearing 1

Thursday 10 July 2008

Witness Guide for Members

Below are suggested themes and questions. They have been provided in advance to the witnesses to allow them to prepare for the types of issues that Members will be interested to explore. All Members are welcome to ask these questions or pose additional ones to the witnesses via the Committee Chairman.

Themes and Questions

Mr Enrique Valles, Clinical and Strategic Lead for Learning Disability, Kent & Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust.

- Please introduce yourself.
- Please discuss the variability in definitions and diagnoses of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- In what ways do different diagnoses affect eligibility mechanisms and service provision for people with ASD? In your view, are there any “gaps” in the services offered? If so, do these gaps affect any groups of people in the Spectrum in particular?
- Please describe the concepts of “Social Communication Disorder” and “Theory of Mind”.
- Please discuss some of the emotional, behavioural and interpersonal issues that can be related to people with autism (for example, the extent to which people with ASD can have a fulfilling life; the way our natural peer group can affect our sense of self; the consequences for happiness, distress and mental health when we feel we do not fit with those around us, etc.).
- What are the implications of the above issues - if any - for the development of services both for children (such as schools, after school activities, intervention services, etc.) and for adults (such as, employment, accommodation, intervention services, advice, etc.)?

- In your view, what kind of support, if any - should both families of children with ASD, and carers of adults with autism, receive?
- In your opinion, to what extent is local service provision in general being successful in dealing with people with autism in Kent?
- In your view, what initiatives and policies – if any - should Kent County Council adopt in order to meet the needs of people with autism in the County?