



This is a repository copy of *Management of prisoners with autism is not perfect but is improving*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
<http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/104704/>

Version: Accepted Version

Article:

Lewis, A., Foster, M., Hughes, C. et al. (1 more author) (2016) Management of prisoners with autism is not perfect but is improving. *British Medical Journal*, 354. i4881. ISSN 0959-8146

<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.i4881>

Reuse

Unless indicated otherwise, fulltext items are protected by copyright with all rights reserved. The copyright exception in section 29 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 allows the making of a single copy solely for the purpose of non-commercial research or private study within the limits of fair dealing. The publisher or other rights-holder may allow further reproduction and re-use of this version - refer to the White Rose Research Online record for this item. Where records identify the publisher as the copyright holder, users can verify any specific terms of use on the publisher's website.

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/>

Re: The identification and management of prisoners with autism is not perfect but is improving

Ashworth (1) draws welcome attention to the difficulties experienced by autistic prisoners.

The Autism Act placed a duty on the Government to produce strategies in relation to autistic people. These strategies contained actions for the criminal justice system (CJS) and the Ministry of Justice set up a cross-Government group to address them.

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) commissioned the National Autistic Society (NAS) to conduct a review of the management of autistic prisoners (2). This was extended by Criminal Justice Joint Inspection (3)(4) which examined the treatment of autistic offenders within the entire CJS. These reviews found a lack of support and understanding of autism throughout the CJS.

Although an autism service has existed within the healthcare department at HMYOI Feltham since 2012, we aspired to a more pervasive, whole prison approach. We collaborated with the NAS to develop and implement standards and a framework for good practice to improve identification and support of autistic prisoners (5).

The NAS Autism Accreditation programme provides an autism-specific quality assurance programme for organisations. The NAS has worked internationally with a wide variety of organisations but this was its first collaboration with a prison.

HMYOI Feltham achieved Autism Accreditation from the NAS in 2015. It is the first prison worldwide to achieve this. It was mentioned in the most recent autism strategy progress report as an example of good practice.

This work attracted Ministerial attention, was discussed in Parliament and was visited by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Autism. In March 2015 the Prisons Minister issued a statement encouraging all prisons to seek Autism Accreditation.

Over 25 prisons have registered interest in working towards Autism Accreditation and a network has developed to share best practice. Pilots have begun to develop similar standards with the National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Companies and Police.

300 words

Competing interests: Clare Hughes is employed by the National Autistic Society which charges a fee for participation in its Autism Accreditation programme.

Authors:

Alexandra Lewis, Consultant Forensic and Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist, Barnet, Enfield & Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust

Clare Hughes, Criminal Justice Manager, National Autistic Society

Mo Foster, Head of Young People & Services, HMYOI Feltham,

Kim Turner, Lead Speech, Language & Communication Therapist, Barnet, Enfield & Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust

Addresses:

HMYOI Feltham, Bedfont Road, Feltham, TW13 4ND

National Autistic Society, 393 City Road, London EC1V 1NG

Barnet, Enfield & Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust, Camlet Lodge, Chase Farm Hospital

The Ridgeway, Enfield EN2 8JL