

NAS announces major new strategy

Mark Lever, chief executive of the NAS, has announced proposals for a major new strategy for the organisation.

He explained: “We are at a pivotal moment for autism services and support in the UK. Awareness of autism has never been higher and in recent years we have made great strides in campaigning for better recognition and support for those with the condition.

“It is crucial that we build on the momentum we now have. Ultimately we want to see quality services and support, and positive outcomes, for every individual affected by autism - and we still have a long way to go to make this a reality.

“We are committed to working in partnership as we move forward and we would welcome discussion on our plans. Crucially, we want to ensure that every element of what we do is informed by the voice of people with autism and their carers and families.”

The new strategy will be underpinned by a major new fundraising drive to support new and existing activities. It is built around three key objectives.

Providing pioneering services

We believe that providing services for people with autism must remain central to what the NAS does. We want to build on our existing wealth of expertise to develop services that are exemplars and a basis for future innovation.

Building a networked autism community

We are looking to build a national network of branches, members, partners and professionals. We want to share experiences, listen and respond to people’s concerns and give the autism community a real voice. We will support this network to lobby and campaign for change in services and support at a national and local level.

Establishing a Centre for Autism

This will be both a physical centre and a virtual hub at the heart of a networked autism community. The autism centre will build capacity and awareness throughout the autism sector by providing information, advice, guidance and training for professionals, parents and people with autism and their supporters. It will also be a focus for the development of professional practice.

The new strategy will involve some internal restructuring of the organization and some job roles will change. This is currently the subject of ongoing internal discussion. Under the new proposals the roles of the NAS regional directors would change substantially as the NAS would put into place new national leadership roles in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. These changes are intended to enable us to build up our campaigning activity in the devolved nations and maximize our impact and the support we can offer

to local groups. We remain absolutely committed to providing support across the UK through our regional presence.