Pol Community Care Ltd
Office 2, Caradon Enterprise Centre, 1 Holman Road, Liskeard Business Park, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 3UT

Review Sheet

Last Reviewed 17 Nov '22	Last Amended 17 Nov '22	Next Planned Review in 12 months, or sooner as required.

Business impact	**MEDIUM IMPACT** — Changes are important, but urgent implementation is not required, incorporate into your existing workflow.
Reason for this review	Scheduled review
Were changes made?	Yes
Summary:	The policy is concerned with raising awareness amongst staff to provide safe and effective support to adults in their care living under the umbrella of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The policy has been reviewed and restructured giving more information to support individuals. A new policy statement (4.7) has been added in relation to the new requirement for CQC registered service providers to ensure their employees receive learning disability and autism training appropriate for their role. A new reference has also been added in relation to this mandatory training. For some customers, the reference number to this policy has changed from CC158 to CC66.
Relevant legislation:	• Autism Act 2009 • The Care Act 2014 • Equality Act 2010 • The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 • Mental Capacity Act 2005 • Mental Health Act 1983 • Health and Care Act 2022

CC66 - Adults with Autism Policy and Procedure
Care Management - Care Practice

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Underpinning knowledge - What have we used to ensure that the policy is current:	• Author: Department of Health, (2015), *Mental Health Act 1983 Code of Practice*. [Online] Available from: [Accessed:] • Author: NHS Health Education England, (2022), *The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism*. [Online] Available from: https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/learning-disability/oliver-mcgowan-mandatory-training-learning-disability-autism#:~:text=Included%20in%20the%20Health%20and,training%20appropriate%20to%20their%20role. [Accessed: 17/11/2022] • Author: NICE, (2021), *Autism spectrum disorder in adults: diagnosis and management*. [Online] Available from: https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg142 [Accessed: 17/11/2022] • Author: GOV UK, (2021), *National strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026*. [Online] Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-strategy-for-autistic-children-young-people-and-adults-2021-to-2026 [Accessed: 17/11/2022] • Author: GOV UK, (2019), *'Right to be heard': The Government's response to the consultation on learning disability and autism training for health and care staff*. [Online] Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_da-and-learning-disability-training-for-staff-consultation-response.pdf [Accessed: 17/11/2022] • Author: Department of Health, (2009), *Assessing and managing risk in mental health services*. [Online] Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/assessing-and-managing-risk-in-mental-health-services [Accessed: 17/11/2022] • Author: Department of Health, (2015), *Statutory guidance - Adult autism strategy: supporting its use*. [Online] Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-autism-strategy-statutory-guidance [Accessed: 17/11/2022] • Author: HM Government, (2014), *Think Autism - Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, the strategy for adults with autism in England: an update*. [Online] Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/think-autism-an-update-to-the-government-adult-autism-strategy [Accessed: 17/11/2022] • Author: PECS, (2022), *What is PECS?*. [Online] Available from: https://pecs-unitedkingdom.com/pecs/ [Accessed: 17/11/2022] • Author: NHS England, (2022), *What is autism?*. [Online] Available from: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/what-is-autism/ [Accessed: 17/11/2022] • Author: National Autistic Society, (2022), *Advice and Guidance*. [Online] Available from: https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance [Accessed: 17/11/2022] • Author: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, (2021), *Autism spectrum disorder in adults: diagnosis and management*. [Online] Available from: https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg142 [Accessed: 17/11/2022]
Suggested action:	• Encourage sharing the policy through the use of the QCS App • Ensure relevant staff are aware of the content of the whole policy
Equality Impact Assessment:	QCS have undertaken an equality analysis during the review of this policy. This statement is a written record that demonstrates that we have shown due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with respect to the characteristics protected by equality law.

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1. Purpose

1.1 To help staff identify and provide person-centred support to adults who may be living with autism or under the umbrella of an autistic spectrum disorder.

1.2 To provide individualised, safe and supportive care for people who may be living with autism.

1.3 To support Pol Community Care Ltd in meeting the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

Key Question	Key Lines of Enquiry
CARING	C2: How does the service support people to express their views and be actively involved in making decisions about their care, support and treatment as far as possible?
EFFECTIVE	E2: How does the service make sure that staff have the skills, knowledge and experience to deliver effective care and support?
RESPONSIVE	R1: How do people receive personalised care that is responsive to their needs?
SAFE	S1: How do systems, processes and practices keep people safe and safeguarded from abuse?

1.4 To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that {Pol Community Care Ltd} is registered to provide:

- Autism Act 2009
- The Care Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Mental Health Act 1983
- Health and Care Act 2022

2. Scope

2.1 The following roles may be affected by this policy:
- All staff

2.2 The following Clients may be affected by this policy:
- Clients

2.3 The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:
- Family
- Advocates
- Commissioners
- External health professionals

3. Objectives

3.1 To provide a framework of supportive care for adults with an autistic spectrum disorder that promotes choice and control over their own lives.

3.2 To ensure that staff working with adults with autism have an understanding of autistic spectrum disorders in order to provide effective individualised support.

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4. Policy

4.1 Staff will be alert to signs that someone may have an autistic spectrum disorder.
These signs may include the following:

- Difficulty in interpreting facial expressions or gestures
- Difficulty forming any friendships
- Intolerance of new stimuli (sights, sounds, smells etc.)
- Inability to sympathise with other people
- Difficulty in making needs known to others
- Having an intense interest in one specialist area to the exclusion of others
- Repeating the same phrases and behaviours
- Over-reliance on the same routine, and not being able to tolerate changes to plans
- Sleep problems and experiencing anxiety

4.2 Staff will be aware of the needs of people in their care with autism; in particular, that they are more likely to have other additional mental and physical disorders and may find it more difficult to understand and access services without support.

4.3 All staff working with adults with autism will work with other professionals, informal carers, family members and legal representatives as appropriate.

4.4 Clients will have a full assessment of their communication, physical, psychological and social wellbeing, as assessment information can guide the identification of autism and its management.

4.5 In conjunction with health care professionals, staff will review the physical and mental health wellbeing of Clients.

4.6 Staff will receive basic awareness training in accordance with national guidance and the requirements of:

- The Autism Act 2009
- The Adult Autism Strategy in England (Department of Health 2015)
- National strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026

In addition, for any identified needs of individual Clients, Pol Community Care Ltd will ensure supplementary training is provided to staff to support those needs.

4.7 The Government has also introduced a requirement for CQC registered service providers to ensure their employees receive learning disability and autism training appropriate to their role.
This is to ensure the health and social care workforce has the right skills and knowledge to provide safe, compassionate and informed Care to autistic people and people with a learning disability.
This requirement is set out in the Health and Care Act 2022. Links can also be found in the Underpinning Knowledge and Further Reading sections of this policy.

4.8 The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has produced guidelines for working with adults with autism. These guidelines are downloadable from the NICE website.
All staff working with adults with autism will follow the principles outlined in the NICE guidance:

- Be respectful when offering care and support
- Take time to build trusting relationships
- Work at the Client's own pace and understanding

4.9 Staff will be aware of guidance on particular issues related to people with autistic spectrum disorders contained in the Mental Health Act 1983: Code of Practice.
It is noted that autistic spectrum conditions are included in the Act's definition of mental disorder. Pol Community Care Ltd supports the Government's proposals to reform the Mental Health Act. Importantly, for autistic people, this includes:

- Change the definition of 'mental disorder' in the Mental Health Act so that it no longer includes autism

5. Procedure

5.1 Autism is neither a learning disability nor a mental health problem. However, mental health problems can be more common amongst people with autism and it is estimated that one in three adults with a learning disability also has autism.

There are other names for autism which are used by some people, such as:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) – the medical name for autism
- Autism Spectrum condition (ASC) – used instead of ASD by some people
- Asperger's (or Asperger syndrome) – describes autistic people with average or above average intelligence

5.2 General Guidelines

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has produced guidelines for treating and managing autism (CG142) and these guidelines will be followed by staff who may be caring for someone who may have autism:

- Where a Client is living with autism, staff must be aware of the process of referral for assessment, which would include referral to the Client's GP, and for an assessment of need under the Care Act 2014
- Where a Client has received a diagnosis of autism, staff must be aware of care pathways in their area for people in their Care
- Offer information in a format that is easily accessible and understandable for the Client
- Consider whether the Client may benefit from access to a trained advocate
- Offer information on self-help or support groups or one-to-one support, and provide support to the Client where required, so that they can access this support
- Assess the physical environment where the Client receives Care in terms of personal space, decor, lighting and noise in relation to any impact on the Client and make appropriate changes where practicable
- Be alert to any physical health issues, lack of physical activity, or changes in eating and drinking and report these to the Client's GP if there are concerns
- Maintain awareness of difficulties regarding social interaction and offer support to the Client, where appropriate, in making or supporting friendships and relationships

5.3 Main Signs of Autism

According to the NHS website, common signs of autism in adults include:

- Finding it hard to understand what others are thinking or feeling
- Getting very anxious about social situations
- Finding it hard to make friends or preferring to be on their own
- Being blunt, rude or not interested in others without meaning to
- Finding it hard to say how they feel
- Taking things very literally – for example, they may not understand sarcasm or phrases like 'break a leg'
- Having the same routine every day and getting very anxious if it changes

Other Signs of Autism

- Not understanding social 'rules', such as not talking over people
- Avoiding eye contact
- Getting too close to other people, or getting very upset if someone touches or gets too close to them
- Noticing small details, patterns, smells or sounds that others do not
- Have a very keen interest in certain subjects or activities
- Planning things carefully before doing them

5.4 Care Plans

Only staff trained in autistic spectrum disorders must undertake an assessment of communication, physical,

mental and emotional health needs and use a Care Plan format that will be reviewed on a regular basis. Adults with autism may find themselves excluded from opportunities for education, employment and training, and helping to provide access to these must be part of the Care Plan process, with the following considerations:

- Including effective communication, verbal or non-verbal, interacting in situations such as 1:1 or communal and community settings, cognitive and motor abilities, learning style, communication needs and literacy ability
- Additional communication needs such as sensory, echolalia, hearing and sight loss
- Use of communication aids such as social stories, signs and symbols, the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Makaton, British Sign Language (BSL), objects of reference and photos. This is not an exhaustive guide but it is essential that communication plans detail all identified needs of individual Clients
- Potential Risks
- Behaviours
    - What behaviours are usually observed and if known, what they indicate and how to respond to them. Link to PBS plans and ABC charts
    - Any identified routines, obsessions, behaviour
    - How to rule out other unknown causes
    - Redirection techniques including rewards, sensory activities
- Sensory needs, such as noisy environments, busy areas, too bright, enclosed etc. and how these affect the individual
- Eating and drinking and any support required including additional diagnoses such as Pica
- Activities which should include likes, dislikes, planning (such as transport), risks and any contingency plans
- Accessible information resources such as easy reads, communication passports, health action plans

Staff can also view further information in the Care Plan and in the suite of policies and procedures at Pol Community Care Ltd.

The National Autistic Society also produces a range of information and resources that staff at Pol Community Care Ltd will find useful when supporting someone with autism - What is Autism?

5.5 Risks

Autism presents potential risk to the mental and physical wellbeing of the person, including the following:

- Vulnerability in relationships
- Conflict with others who do not understand the nature of the autism
- Poor sleep patterns
- Poor diet
- Risks to family relationships

If staff believe someone they are working with is at risk of harm, they must share that information with their line manager, in line with local safeguarding procedures. Safeguarding is everyone's business and staff and the person themselves must be involved with any concerns about welfare.

Pol Community Care Ltd will ensure that, as part of its Care Plan process, the required risk assessments are in place and these are monitored and reviewed in a timely manner.

Risk management must not be seen as the elimination of risk. There are risks for everyone in all walks of life, and to try and eliminate them would result in a loss of independence and choice, so risk management must be seen in the context of positive risk-taking.

Best practice describes the importance of a collaborative approach to managing risk, involving the Client and the whole of the Care team, so that trusting relationships are developed that aid communication.

5.6 Mental Capacity

Where a Client with autism is unable to take certain decisions or choices regarding their care and support, those decisions must be taken for that Client in accordance with the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and best interest process.

Staff can refer to the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 Policy and Procedure at Pol Community Care Ltd.

5.7 Learning and Development

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Pol Community Care Ltd will ensure that all staff supporting a Client with autism have autism training. Staff may need additional training according to a Client's specific needs.

In addition, staff at Pol Community Care Ltd should have positive behaviour support (PBS) and active support training.

6. Definitions

6.1 Picture Communication Systems (PECS)
- A communication system designed to teach functional communication

6.2 Autism
- Autism is defined as a spectrum disorder because the range of symptoms can vary from one person to another. When we use the term 'autistic spectrum disorders', we usually include Autism, Asperger's Syndrome and Atypical Autism
- Autism is a developmental disorder associated with the following:
    - Difficulty with social communication
    - Difficulty with social interaction
    - Difficulty with social imagination

6.3 Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a term used to describe a number of symptoms and behaviours which affect the way in which a group of people understand and react to the world around them. It is an umbrella term which includes autism, Asperger's syndrome and pervasive developmental disorders
- People with autism can also have a learning disability, ranging from those requiring minimal support to lead an active life through to those requiring lifelong, specialist support
- Having a diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome does not constitute having a learning disability

6.4 Asperger's Syndrome
- People with Asperger's Syndrome have a difficult time relating to others socially and their behaviour and thinking patterns can be rigid and repetitive
- It is a form of Autism Spectrum Disorder and is a developmental disorder

6.5 Echolalia
- Someone with echolalia might only be able to repeat a question rather than answer it. In many cases, echolalia is an attempt to communicate, learn language or practise language
- People with echolalia repeat noises and phrases that they hear. They may not be able to communicate effectively because they struggle to express their own thoughts

6.6 Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)
- AAC means all of the ways that someone communicates besides talking:
    - Augmentative means to add to someone's speech
    - Alternative means to be used instead of speech
- People of all ages can use AAC if they have trouble with speech or language skills. Some people use AAC throughout their life. Others may use AAC only for a short time, like when they have surgery and cannot talk

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Key Facts - Professionals

Professionals providing this service should be aware of the following:

- Staff must be aware that for individuals living under the autistic umbrella, this may result in barriers to effective communication, verbal or non-verbal
- Social stories present information in a literal, 'concrete' way which may improve a person's understanding of a previously difficult or ambiguous situation or activity. The presentation and content can be adapted to meet different people's needs
- Visual supports are a communication tool that can be used with autistic people. They can be used in most situations and are adaptable and portable
- Some autistic people have a restricted diet, eating only a limited range of food. Others may overeat
- All staff supporting a person with autism must have autism training. Staff may need additional training according to specific needs
- Autism is a neurodevelopmental condition that is lifelong, beginning in childhood and continuing through adulthood. The features of the disorder include difficulty with social communication, such as not being able to pick up on more subtle aspects of communication, e.g. non-verbal cues or expressions that are not meant to be taken literally; difficulty with social interaction including not tuning into the feelings of other people around them and difficulty with social imagination such as not being able to understand the thoughts of others or predict the consequences of actions
- The way that people with autism act or behave can be different dependent on age, circumstances and types of intervention, or whether there are other conditions present such as a learning disability
- Autism is neither a learning disability nor a mental health problem, although mental health problems can be more common among people with autism and it is estimated that one in three of adults with a learning disability also have autism

Key Facts - People affected by the service

People affected by this service should be aware of the following:

- You can expect to be supported and cared for by trained, knowledgeable members of staff
- Pol Community Care Ltd will work with other professionals who support you and your carers/family to ensure that you receive the support and care you need and prefer

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Further Reading

As well as the information in the 'underpinning knowledge' section of the review sheet we recommend that you add to your understanding in this policy area by considering the following materials:

Active Support - A Handbook for Supporting People with Learning Disabilities to Lead Full Lives:
https://arcengland.org.uk/shop/active-support-handbook/
Mencap - Mandatory Learning Disability and Autism Training - FAQ:
https://www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-mencap/treat-me-well/learning-disability-and-autism-training/mandatory
NHS - Autism:
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/
National Autistic Society - What is Autism?
https://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is.aspx
GOV.UK Learning Disability and Autism Training Response:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843911/learning-disability-and-autism-training-response-easy-read.pdf
GOV.UK - Think Autism Strategy Governance Refresh:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/696667/think-autism-strategy-governance-refresh.pdf
National Autistic Society - Coronavirus - Resources for Autistic People and Families:
https://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines/coronavirus/resources/helpful-resources.aspx

Outstanding Practice

To be ' outstanding ' in this policy area you could provide evidence that:
- Pol Community Care Ltd implements a number of innovative ways to demonstrate that it works with people to help them achieve their maximum potential
- Pol Community Care Ltd uses innovation such as 'what do you like?' cards to find out more about how people with autism experience the world through their senses. Knowing how people respond to sights and sounds, textures, touch and smell helps staff to communicate and work effectively with people using the service
- Support provided is individualised to the Client's personal preferences, needs and cultural identities. People's likes, dislikes and how they like things done are explored and incorporated into their Care Plans
- Information is provided in accessible formats to help people understand their care and support
- The wide understanding of the policy is enabled by proactive use of the QCS App
- All staff who may be working with adults with autistic spectrum disorders have undertaken autism awareness training

Forms

Currently there is no form attached to this policy.