

NHS England Specification

Learning Disability and Autism National
Advancing Practice Hub



Introduction

The case for advancing practitioners in learning disability and autism is critical to the transformation of services and the people they serve. However, identifying potential trainees and supporting them through three-year Masters (MSc) advanced practice programmes or a two-year aspiring multi-professional consultant pathway has proven extremely challenging for both organisations and the trainees themselves. This is because most of the organisations that provide learning disability and autism services have little experience of advancing practice in line with NHS England's Centre for Advancing Practice and what this entails, whilst at the same time coping with daily challenges of providing services with a depleted and stretched workforce.

This specification proposes a Learning Disability & Autism National Advancing Practice Hub and Spoke package ("the Hub"). However, NHS England (NHSE) remains open to similar innovative models of delivery, provided they can achieve the deliverables as set out in Section 6 of this Specification.

Our Vision and Goals

NHSE is an executive non-departmental public body of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). The purpose of the new NHSE Workforce, Training & Education (WT&E) directorate (formerly Health Education England) is to ensure the NHS in England has a sufficient and inclusive workforce with the knowledge, skills, values, and behaviours to deliver compassionate high-quality health and care to the people it serves. Working nationally and with regions, systems, and organisations to support delivery of the NHS Long-Term Workforce Plan, Elective, Urgent Emergency Care and Primary Care, Recovery Plans and Planning Guidance.

The deliverables from NHSE National Learning Disabilities and Autism Programme (the Programme) are mandated by key policy drivers, notably:

- [The NHS Long Term Plan \(2019\) \(NHS LTP\)](#)
- [Health and Care Act 2022](#)
- [Building the Right Support 2015](#)
- [Building the Right Support Action Plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The NHS People Plan](#)
- [The Learning Disabilities Mortality Review \(LeDeR\) Programme¹](#)

¹ The NHS LTP and the Learning Disabilities Mortality Review (LeDeR) Programme, sets an ambition to reduce health inequality, premature death, and inappropriate hospital admissions amongst people with LD&A.

- [The National Autism Strategy \(2021\)](#)
- [The NHS 15-year workforce strategy](#)
- [NHS Long Term Workforce Plan](#)

This commission supports NHSE to optimise the learning disability and autism advanced and consultant practice workforce to retain existing clinical staff and impact positively on the lives of people who use these services and their family/carers.

Background

Advancing Practice

Advanced and consultant practitioners are fully qualified regulated healthcare professionals such as nurses, Allied Health Professionals (AHPs), social workers and pharmacists who receive additional postgraduate education, training, and assessment to confirm they can function at an advanced or consultant level of practice. They are key to creating 21st century clinicians able to deliver the ambition of the NHS LTP. Advanced and consultant practitioners are redefining how multi-professional teams are working across the country to enable increased access to care, senior decision making and diagnostics, focusing on personalised care, and optimising independence. This creates socio-economic benefits enabling people to stay at home, where that is their choice, and remain in work and in education. The evidence shows that advanced and consultant practitioners working as senior decision makers can demonstrably show an easing of burden on other practitioners, for example, in hard pressed medical rotas, making it safer all around and building on the throughput and experience of people who use services and their family/carers. The transforming care agenda has been trying to support people with learning disability and autism to leave inappropriate hospital care and to live more ordinary, and effectively supported, lives in the community. The role of the advanced practitioner and consultant practitioner is pivotal in cross systems leadership between health and care.

Routes to Advanced & Consultant Practice

Advanced practice is a level of practice characterised by a high degree of autonomy and complex decision making. This is underpinned by a MSc level award or equivalent that encompasses the four pillars of clinical practice, leadership and management, education, and research, with a demonstration of generic and/or area specific clinical capabilities. There are several routes to becoming an advanced practitioner:

- a) A taught MSc programme
- b) An apprenticeship

c) The Centre for Advancing Practice² (the Centre) e-Portfolio (Supported) route.

There are Centre-endorsed credentials³ for both [Learning Disability](#) and for [Autism](#).

Consultant Practice is characterised by expertise in four domains necessary for enabling quality care from micro, to meso and macro levels of the system. It also enables the key skill set for systems leadership and systems transformation aided by clinical credibility in the practitioners own professional field.

Aspiring consultant practitioners undertake a two-year multi-professional development pathway to grow as a consultant practitioner. The development will correspond with the [multi-professional consultant-level practice capability and impact framework](#) to progress aspiring consultants working in learning disabilities and autism services as system leaders and embedded researchers, exemplifying expert practice, strategic and enabling leadership, learning, developing, and improving across the system, and research and innovation. This is a bespoke pathway tailored to the development needs of individuals, identified through a [self-assessment tool](#). Consultant practitioners will be fundamental in transforming services for people with a learning disability and autism by using strategic influence.

Addressing Health Inequalities for People with a Learning Disability and Autistic People

Addressing health inequalities has been a long-standing priority in learning disability and autism services as highlighted in the [Cipold Report \(2013\)](#) and subsequent LeDer Reports. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, this has become more important than ever. NHSE is committed to supporting local health systems to better address inequalities in access, experience, and outcomes for people with a learning disability and autistic people and their family/carers.

People (children, young people, and adults) with a learning disability and autistic people have a right to access good quality healthcare. Their health needs are often greater and more complex and frequently present differently from those without a learning disability and autism. The NHS LTP states that “across the health service we will do more to ensure that all these individuals can live happier, healthier and longer lives”. However, there is clear evidence that people with a learning disability and autistic people experience poorer access to healthcare and worse health outcomes.

One of the starkest inequalities is that people with a learning disability experience very high rates of avoidable premature mortality. Most recently, the LeDeR Programme⁴, has highlighted

² Oversees the workforce transformation of advanced level practice, by establishing and monitoring standards for education and training, accrediting advanced level programmes, supporting, and recognising educational and training equivalence, and growing and embedding the advanced and consultant practice workforce.

³ Standardised, structured units of assessed learning that are designed to develop advanced-level practice capability. For further information please refer to the Centre for Advancing Practice [webpages on credentials](#).

⁴ University of Bristol (2017)

the persistence of health inequalities and that people with a learning disability die, on average, 22-26 years sooner than people without a learning disability.

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how people perceive, communicate and interact with others. Autism varies widely and is often referred to as a spectrum condition, because of the range of ways it can impact on people and the different level of support they may need across their lives⁶. While autism is not a learning disability, [around 4 in 10 autistic people have a learning disability \(Autistica\)](#).

The National Strategy for Autistic Children, Young People and Adults 2021-2026, extends its scope to children and young people for the first time, in recognition of the importance of ensuring that they are diagnosed and receive the right support as early as possible and across their lifetime. In 2021, many autistic people faced long waiting times for their diagnosis, low level early-stage support and a significant number of autistic people struggled in childhood, at the point of diagnosis and in finding support post diagnosis, at school, at work and in adulthood.

Additionally, the number of people identified as being autistic in inpatient mental health services is on the increase, and the scale of the life expectancy gap for autistic people is known to be approximately 16 years, compared to the general population⁶.

There are many barriers to obtaining an autism diagnosis, such as knowledge of autism, availability of diagnostic services, and funding. A population study in the UK screened the adult population and found that approximately 1.1% of UK general population adults meet criteria for an autism diagnosis. Those with elevated autistic traits can experience similar difficulties to autistic people, such as sensory hypersensitivity, and social communication and sensorimotor difficulties. Many adults who are high in autistic traits, and in particular women, are likely to go undiagnosed, even though they might meet criteria for an autism diagnosis owing to lack of appropriate services, validated diagnostic tools. Previous research has confirmed an increased vulnerability to mental health problems in both autistic people and those with elevated autistic traits⁷. Autistic people are at significantly higher risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviours compared with non-autistic people.

The Learning Disability and Autism Workforce

Workforce is the most significant risk for the Programme reported at system, regional and national levels against the NHS LTP deliverables. When skills, knowledge and understanding are lacking in the mainstream public service workforce this can create fundamental barriers for many people with a learning disability and autistic people in accessing the services we all need. The successful delivery of services involves a workforce that is extensive and diverse, including many staff closely engaged in providing care to a known individual or small group, and others offering information, support, and assistance in a range of public services – being able to make

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-strategy-for-autistic-children-young-people-and-adults-2021-to-2026>

⁷ [Autism and autistic traits in those who died by suicide in England | The British Journal of Psychiatry | Cambridge Core](#)

reasonable adjustments so that their services are welcoming and effective for people with a learning disability and autistic people is essential and currently not always evident.

Scope

Rationale for The Learning Disability and Autism National Advancing Practice Hub

To date our approach to expand advanced practice trainees in learning disability and autism has included enhanced financial incentives to employers (including contributions to course fees and salary backfill) to increase the numbers of advanced practitioners. However, following broader discussion within NHSE WT&E and a review of the impact of previous incentivised offers, it was determined that the provision of a significantly enhanced financial package alone was insufficient to sustainably increase the numbers of learning disability and autism advanced practitioners and a more strategic approach is required. Some of the reasons cited include:

- Organisations being unable to commit and prioritise trainees over organisational/service demands.
- No staff to backfill roles.
- Lack of understanding or appropriate governance.
- Trainees citing lack of support and adequate supervision leading them to feel demoralised and unsupported.
- The advanced practice programmes being geared towards general and acute workforce and without additional support through advanced physical health assessment modules.
- Inability of organisations to identify the advanced practice role that the trainee would be moving into on completion of training.

We have therefore concluded:

- Employer reticence of putting in place permanent advancing practice posts requires a strategic workforce planning approach (as part of an organisational development (OD) plan) that is not currently evident.
- The lack of understanding of the long-term benefits of advancing practice roles together with a lack of capability and capacity in some organisations to develop and support these roles limits the introduction of new roles and workforce models.
- This further constrains qualified advanced practitioners and consultant practitioners from putting into practice the knowledge and skills developed on the programme/pathway.

- There are also opportunities through transformation of services with new neurodevelopmental pathways and services. There is a need for the skills and competencies of advancing practice roles in these new services.

To address system readiness, it has been agreed that for a set period, funds can be repurposed to develop a learning disability and autism hub with 'spokes' sited in each of WT&E's seven regions.


Definition and Purpose of The Learning Disabilities & Autism Advancing Practice Hub

The Programme will be a pilot for introducing aspiring multi-professional advanced practitioners into learning disability and autism services and the support required to optimise these roles apply similarly to the multi-professional consultant role. An alternative feasible option to this commission would be additional capacity into each regional Faculty for Advancing Practice. However, there is insufficient existing capacity to take on these additional activities within the faculties and it is not possible to grow this capacity given the freeze on recruitment and a reduction in roles and capacity associated with the NHSE restructure.

External organisations already have experience in this field and have the necessary infrastructure to support this fixed term project (please see further below for mandatory requirements). It is therefore proposed that the Hub be hosted by an organisation or consortia experienced in the delivery of post graduate level advancing practice education and training in learning disability and autism, or experienced in delivering advanced practice education and work with an external organisation, for example, to provide the learning disability and autism expertise/input. The organisation requires the capability, expertise, and capacity to support the specific education training needs of aspiring trainees, trainees, existing advanced and consultant practitioners, supervisors, and employers (e.g., supervision, Organisation Development support).

The successful supplier will be required to establish the Hub as a virtual concept. NHSE anticipates that the successful supplier will establish a flexible model of delivery that will be based on the following (or similar) innovative model of delivery:

- Comprise of a central 'hub' of relevant learning disability and autism expertise; not constrained by geographical boundaries (within England) that operates at national level to co-ordinate the support offer.
- Recruit and assign a variety of roles/individuals to operate as outreach education and organisational development resources or 'spokes' from the Hub to work with regions/local systems in a way that is sensitive to existing system maturity and priority of need.



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The purpose of the Hub is to build a support system and drive the establishment and embedding of the learning disability and autism advanced and consultant practice workforce including:

- Organisational readiness, supervision, trainee experience and support.
- Developing supervisors and work-based support for trainees.
- Provide equitable opportunities to all aspiring advanced and consultant practitioners.
- Developing future pipelines for multi-professional advanced practitioners and consultant practitioners.
- Retention and continuing development of advanced and consultant practitioners.
- Demonstration that sustainability and value for money are at the heart of this alternative approach.
- Developing and managing a community of practice for:
 - Learning disability trainees and practitioners (advanced and consultant)
 - Autism trainees and practitioners (advanced and consultant)

There is an expectation that the Hub will build on extensive experience that the provider(s) already have in the field of advancing practice in learning disability and autism.

The Hub will work with the Programme, the Centre for Advancing Practice and NHSE's 7 regional Faculties for Advancing Practice to work with and engage the system to recruit and train at least the minimum ambition of 40 learning disability and autism advanced practitioners and 10 learning disability and autism consultant practitioners per year.


Out of Scope

This commission does not include the course fees and other direct education funding support which will continue to be deployed to employers and respective higher education institutions.

Detailed Essential Requirements

The Hub will co-ordinate and deliver the following requirements:

- Develop, finalise, and operationalise the Learning Disability and Autism Hub Concept.
- Successfully launch the Hub, grow, and maintain interest and engagement through targeted promotional activities.



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- Raise the profile of advanced and consultant practice in learning disability and autism by improving the connectivity of those with an interest in this area to promote shared understanding, learning, best practice, support, and guidance.
- Improve awareness, expertise, and skills in learning disability and autism advanced and consultant practice through easy access to high quality, contemporary and relevant education, and training materials.
- Increase learning disability and autism advanced practice supervisory capability and capacity.
- Deliver this commission in accordance with the quality assurance requirements and price set out in this specification.
- Increase and retain workforce supply through additional learning disability and autism teaching and educator capacity that can role model and provide support to aspiring trainees, trainees, supervisors, alumni, and provide general support to those from within their own profession.
- Promote, increase, and retain workforce supply through additional learning disability and autism teaching and educator capacity targeted at system level.
- Drive uptake of learning disability and autism advanced and consultant practice by increasing employer awareness of the benefits to service delivery.
- Provide strategic workforce and organisational development support where required.


The Hub will evidence that the requirements of the specification have been fully met within agreed timelines by demonstrating compliance with the detailed deliverables and Key Performance Indicators set out below.

The Hub will 'outreach' to regions and systems via identified individuals with specific remits to support aspiring trainees, trainees, existing advanced and consultant practitioners, and employers and who will work alongside the Programme, the Centre for Advancing Practice and the 7 regional Faculties for Advancing practice.

Aspiring trainees, trainees, existing advanced and consultant practitioners, supervisors and employers may 'reach into' the Hub to seek education and training support as described in this specification.

The Hub will be prepared to promote the advancing practice agenda in accordance with the strategic direction of the prevailing Centre for Advancing Practice policies and guidance more broadly.

Mandatory Requirements



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The Hub will be hosted by an organisation or consortia experienced in the delivery of post graduate level advancing practice education and training in learning disability and autism, or experienced in delivering advanced practice education and work with an external organisation, for example, to provide the learning disability and autism expertise/input. The organisation requires the capability, expertise, and capacity to support the specific education training needs of aspiring trainees, trainees, existing advanced and consultant practitioners, supervisors, and employers (e.g., supervision, Organisation Development support).



Deliverables, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Timelines and Review Dates

| Objectives/Deliverables | Performance Indicators/Evidence Exemplars | Timeline s and Review dates |
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| <p>1. Develop, finalise, and operationalise the learning disability and autism Hub Concept. The Supplier(s) will work with the Programme, Centre for Advancing Practice, regional Faculties for Advancing Practice and other stakeholders, including experts by experience, to produce an Operating Plan for the approval by NHSE within 4 weeks of the contract sign off.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence of effective engagement with all stakeholders, including experts by experience to ensure co-creation and co-production.• Operating Plan (including governance, stakeholder engagement and operational guidelines) in place for working with the Programme, NHSE Centre for Advancing Practice and the 7 regional Faculties for Advancing Practice.• Stakeholder Advisory Group established with terms of reference and meeting schedule.• Successful recruitment and induction of Hub project management team and timelines for the recruitment employment and induction of educator and Organisational Development staff.• Evidence of access to patient voice/advocates/lived experience in the development and delivery of the Hub and spoke model. | <i>TBC</i> |



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| <p>2. Successfully launch the Hub, grow, and maintain interest and engagement through targeted promotional activities. The Supplier(s) will produce and deliver a Communications Plan within 6 weeks of the contract sign off that sets out activities to advertise the launch of the Hub concept and encourage engagement by trainees, registrants, and employers from the learning disability and autism community.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Communications Plan delivered within in the timeframe (to include stakeholder mapping, social media campaign and other media advertising/publicity to launch the Hub and that sets out sustained activity during the lifecycle of the contract). | <i>TBC</i> |
| <p>3. Raise the profile of advancing and consultant practice in learning disability and autism by improving the connectivity of those with an interest in learning disability and autism to promote shared understanding, learning, best practice, support, and guidance. The Supplier(s) will use an existing community of practice/network to make best use of the available platform and review the need for other tools that can be used for this purpose.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to grow the existing community of practice.• Evidence of a well-managed communication resources including appropriate governance arrangements, operational plans, and technical support in place.• Evidence of consumer analysis within the learning disability and autism community to determine the most appropriate configuration of the community(ies) of practice and agree these with NHSE.• Evidence of consumer analysis within the learning disability and autism community to determine educational priorities of the target audience.• Evidence of effective quality assurance process in place to ensure the quality of materials available via the platform. | <i>TBC</i> |



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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sub-sections dedicated to specific members of the learning disability and autism community:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Learning disability○ Autism○ University providers of learning disability and autism provision• Numbers joining and participating in the community(ies) | |
| <p>4. Improve awareness, expertise, and skills in learning disability and autism advanced and consultant practice through easy access to high quality, contemporary and relevant education, and training materials. The Supplier(s) will create, procure, or otherwise source and make available education and training resources/materials making best use of the communities of practice/networks.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scope demand and content for action learning sets for registrants, trainees, and others to meet identified needs.• Meet the need for and content for action learning sets.• Monthly programmes of educational events/webinars developed and delivered via the platform and promote 2 months in advance of delivery date. First programme to take place before dd/mm/yy.• Ability to demonstrate the quality of the formal education and training provided e.g., accredited by the Centre for Advancing Practice. | <i>TBC</i> |



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| <p>5. Increase learning disability and autism advanced practice supervisory capability and capacity. The supplier(s) will deliver face-to-face supervisor training courses to increase the number of Advanced practice supervisors in learning disability and autism (additional 50 supervisors trained). The Supplier(s) will provide support and advice through a dedicated email access help desk.</p> <p>2023/24 – 14 courses</p> <p>2024/25 – 14 courses</p> <p>2025/26 – 14 courses</p> <p>2026/27 – 7 courses</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A high-quality supervisor training programme syllabus tailored to the needs of learning disability and autism practitioners.• A programme of delivery.• Evidence of capacity to deliver required number.• Trainee supervisor email access 'help desk' up and running within 4 weeks of contract sign off.• Categorisation and summary of help desk activity on a quarterly basis• Number of supervisors trained per quarter and per annum against target by total/by region/by ICS/employer. | <i>TBC</i> |
| <p>6. Deliver this commission in accordance with the quality assurance requirements and price set out in this specification. The supplier(s) confirm that for the duration of the contract it will participate fully in all contract management and quality review activities either internally or from external resources</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence of active, positive engagement/participation in contract management/quality reviews.• Participation in evaluation activity as part of a continuous improvement approach.• Provision of data collections to demonstrate delivery of these KPIs.• Delivery of the specification within agreed costs. | <i>TBC</i> |



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| <p>7. Increase and retain workforce supply through additional learning disability and autism teaching and educator capacity that can role model and provide support to aspiring trainees, trainees, supervisors, alumni, and provide general support to those from within their own profession. The supplier(s) will recruit and embed associate teaching roles to actively mentor their respective profession, lead communities of practice and action learning sets, drive multi-professional role modelling (to understand the professional diversity opportunities available) and draw people into advancing practice.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Associate teaching roles recruited and inducted.• Purpose: To role model and provide support to aspiring trainees, trainees, supervisors, and alumni, support people within their own profession, role model for aspiring colleagues the professional diversity opportunities available.• Evidence of how these roles will be co-ordinated and utilised to support delivery of this specification.• Evidence of year-on-year growth in advanced practice demand for learning disability and autism (e.g., Year 1 40, Year 2 100, Year 3 150 etc.).• Evidence of growth in consultant practice demand for learning disability and autism to at least annual ambition of 10.• Evidence of how these roles will interact with other Hub/spoke staff to optimise impact of the Hub and spoke model.• Example structure = 12 roles across different professions (0.6 WTE). | <i>TBC</i> |
| <p>8. Promote, increase, and retain workforce supply through additional learning disability and autism teaching and educator capacity targeted at system level. The Supplier(s) will</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• System facing educators recruited and inducted.• Evidence of how these roles will be co-ordinated and utilised to support delivery of this specification. | <i>TBC</i> |



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| <p>recruit and embed outreach educators to support the practice-based education supervisors and role transitions to ensure optimal utilisation of roles and drive service improvement activity at system and regional level.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence of how these roles will be organised to address areas of high priority.• Evidence of growth in advancing practice demand for learning disability and autism to at least annual ambition of 40.• Evidence of growth in consultant practice demand for learning disability and autism to at least annual ambition of 10.• Evidence of how these roles will interact with other Hub/spoke staff to optimise impact of the Hub and spoke model.• Example structure = 7 roles (0.8 WTE). | |
| <p>9. Drive uptake of learning disability and autism advanced and consultant practice by increasing employer awareness of the benefits to service delivery. The Supplier(s) will recruit and embed organisation development experts to provide practical support to systems regarding the benefits of advanced and consultant practice in learning disability and autism.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• System facing organisation development experts recruited and inducted.• Purpose: Driving uptake and governance. Work closely with the educators and system around system priorities, organisational capacity and capability to optimally utilise, understand and safety govern enhancing practice roles to advanced and consultant levels.• Evidence of how these roles will be co-ordinated and utilised to support delivery of this specification. | <i>TBC</i> |



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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence of how these roles will be organised to address areas of high priority.• Evidence of how these roles will reach out to acute and community services to promote and increase knowledge and understanding of learning disability and autism for practitioners in learning disability and autism within these services. This could impact avoidable premature deaths and by targeting the mainstream services, highlights system leadership.• Evidence of how these roles will interact with other Hub/spoke staff to optimise impact of the Hub and spoke model.• Example structure = 7 roles aligned to each region in England (1 WTE) | |
| 10. Demonstrate return on investment of this initiative | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree, prepare and collate sufficient data to inform future evaluation of model.• Participate in the evaluation to ensure people with lived experience, practitioner and organisation voices are represented to ensure quality of the model. | <i>TBC</i> |

Contract Management and Review

The Programme will establish a contract management group to monitor the delivery of the Hub and the requirements of this specification.

The Programme will produce Terms of Reference and a schedule of meetings to be held monthly.

Sustainability

The Parties will agree to manage the contract virtually where possible to ensure a neutral carbon footprint.

The Successful Bidder will be expected to demonstrate sustainability in their approach to the delivery of this specification and the operationalisation of the Hub model. This may take the form of blended learning and virtual learning and virtual individual 'surgeries' ensuring that the quality of the intervention is not compromised.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Privacy Impact Assessments (PIA)

The Successful Bidder must comply with GDPR Regulations (2018) as they pertain to any data received or shared in relation to this commission, with particular attention paid to participant/trainee data.

Information processing based on third party stakeholder contact details across groups will be essential for ensuring the diversity of groups partnerships and the quality of content produced. All stakeholders will be required to complete a Third-Party Assurance form.

Tender Requirements

The provider should demonstrate the planning, development, and subsequent quality assured delivery of the product as negotiated with NHSE based on the outline above and articulate their ability to start development of the programme from as soon as the contract is awarded and commencing delivery as soon as possible and with a feasible and reasonable timeline for completion within the 2023/24 financial year.

This work should:

- Involve the people who use services (including young people), carers and workforce voice directly throughout.
- Be developed using the underpinning principles of the importance of communication based on compassionate care and with a culture of intelligent kindness threaded throughout.

Publication reference:

- Take into consideration any key policy drivers/existing evidence base in the fields of learning disability and autism advanced and consultant practice.
- Be developed in consultation with key experts, to ensure alignment with wider services. Drawing on the evidence from experts in the field, including the academic evidence base in service provision and education, but also representatives from current services, and most importantly, experts by lived experience and their carers.
- Be designed alongside associated guidance, evidence, and best practice to support the effective utilisation of any product so that it may be employed directly in the workforce planning and transformation of those working in learning disability and autism services, e.g., map and training assessment tool to support services to understand the quality of existing training and how it aligns to advancing practice workforce development.
- Include considerations relating to frameworks for supervision/supervisors in the context of advanced practice learners or trainees, including the current workforce, their continuous professional development and future supply pipeline.
- Consider the latest NHS LTP ambitions and how they may impact this work.

Financial Envelope

The maximum financial envelope for the lifetime of this contract is £4,173,008, exclusive of VAT. The provider will be expected to provide an outline of their proposed delivery costs aligned to a milestone delivery plan. There may be some adjustments to costs in 23/24 depending on the start date of the commission.

Successful Bid

It is expected that work will commence upon contract award and run for approximately 4 years.


Upon signed contract return, NHSE will raise a Purchase Order and pay subject to satisfactory performance. Payment and invoice details will be sent to the lead contact cited.

Contract

The contract terms and conditions are attached, and the length will be for approximately 4 years.

Key Terms and Conditions

Successful bidders will be conferred the status of preferred provider and will be awarded a contract.



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Bidders are required to clearly outline the main point of contact for single bidders or the main point of contact for the lead partner in any Consortia bids or arrangements involving subcontracting. The roles of any key contacts should be clearly outlined.

The Successful Bidder will be considered data managers for this provision and should demonstrate their ability to meet GDPR requirements.

The Successful Bidder will be expected to attend and positively participate in regular contract monitoring meetings with NHSE including participation in monthly contract review meetings and submission of monthly highlight reports detailing delivery risks and issues. These arrangements will be further defined on contract award to the successful bidder(s).

Who can apply?

Applications are welcome as sole organisation applications, as well as from consortia. We would welcome collaborations between educational institutions, voluntary sector providers and service provider organisations, although we have no preference for such collaborations.

Consortium submissions must be submitted by a lead organisation on behalf of others and approved by an Executive Director or equivalent.

Organisations are limited to a maximum of one sole application and one as part of a consortium or subcontracting arrangement.

The number of applications is restricted by organisation rather than by individual, therefore Directors can be named on multiple applications.

How will the applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed according to the evaluation criteria set out.

NHSE may at its absolute discretion amend the specification document. Under such circumstances, NHSE will notify all relevant parties and consideration will be given to extending the deadline if appropriate.

NHSE will establish a panel for the evaluation of the bids against the tender specification and evaluation criteria.

NHSE will evaluate all tenders without prejudice or bias towards any one bidder that fulfils the conditions and requirements of this invitation to quote (ITQ).

The panel will consist of representatives and clinical advisors from:

- NHSE (National Learning Disability and Autism Programme and the Centre for Advancing Practice)

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- Service user/person with lived experience (such as a young person, parent/carer, or adult)

The panel will recommend to NHSE their preferred bidder(s) who give the best overall compliance with this specification.

The Authority is not bound to accept any submission and may at any time and at its entire discretion terminate this procurement any time without making any contract award. Unless the submission stipulates to the contrary, the Authority may choose to accept any part of a tender.

NHSE reserves the right not to award if no appropriate bids are received and seek an alternative means of providing the education and training service for that provision.

The Authority reserves the right not to evaluate a proposal that does not conform to the submission format or comply with the specification.

Evaluation criteria

All eligible bids will be evaluated against the following criteria weighted by importance.

The Panel reserves the right to amend scores based on any clarification responses provided during the evaluation process.

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| <p>1. Accessible version of bid</p> <p>An accessible easy read summary of the bid must be provided along with the response document.</p> <p>The accessible easy read summary should not include details of costs.</p> | <p>tbc%</p> |
| <p>2. Evidence of Performance</p> <p>Please demonstrate your experience/past performance in the delivery of post graduate level advancing practice education and training in Learning Disability and Autism.</p> <p>Please demonstrate how you would support organisations around business planning, pipelines to support people to access advancing practice training and development programmes, and support people into effective roles after training.</p> <p>Please confirm that people with lived experience (people with a learning disability and autistic people and/or their family/carers) will be part of the co-production and co-delivery of the project.</p> | <p>tbc%</p> |

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| <p>3. Capability/Capacity and Delivery</p> <p>Please demonstrate how you would operationalise the Hub by setting out an outline Operational Plan.</p> <p>This must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the proposed model/concept. • A delivery plan for completing the project according to the timescales required. • A major risks and issues log involved with suggested mitigating actions. • A team organogram, including roles/responsibilities and credentials/CVs of those putting forward this proposal. • How you would ensure new practitioners are added to the workforce, not relying on existing ones | <p>tbc%</p> |
| <p>4. Management and Support</p> <p>Please describe how you would manage and support the Hub.</p> <p>This must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outline Operational Plan for the establishment and delivery of the Hub. • An articulation of how the workload of the associate teaching roles, the OD specialists and additional education roles at system level will be planned and co-ordinated. • A high-level communications plan to support launch and what activities you propose to maintain interest. | <p>tbc%</p> |
| <p>5. Credibility/Influence</p> <p>Please demonstrate your experience in leading health and care workforce development support and evidence your experience of wide stakeholder management and relationship management. Your experience should also highlight your proficiency in engaging services and service users (including adults, young people, and parents and carers) in learning disability and autism. This must include a stakeholder</p> | <p>tbc%</p> |

| | |
|---|-----|
| <p>engagement plan and how you would propose to use the stakeholder advisory group.</p> <p>Please also demonstrate your experience involving people with lived experience in projects and evidence a how you will ensure a co-delivered approach for the implementation of the Hub.</p> | |
| <p>6. Social Value</p> <p>Please demonstrate how you will help NHSE's commitment to address socio-economic inequality. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How your organisation values align with this aspiration - How you will be improving equality for negatively impacted groups - How you will help NHSE to identify, monitor and improve access for underprivileged groups through this initiative - How the Hub can assist NHSE to improve socio-economic equality | 10% |
| <p>7. Value for Money – Costings</p> <p>Please provide a breakdown of the costings in alignment with the delivery plan for providing the service, including of VAT, for one year.</p> <p>The maximum financial envelope is £4,173,008 exclusive of VAT. Any bids received above this amount will be excluded from the procurement process.</p> | 15% |
| <p>8. Total Cost of the Service</p> <p>Please provide one figure that is the total cost of the service, including VAT, for one year.</p> <p>The maximum financial envelope is £4,173,008 exclusive of VAT. Any bids received above this amount will be excluded from the procurement process.</p> | 10% |

Outline Timetable for tender applications, evaluation, and decisions:

| Tender Timescales | |
|---|--|
| Contracts Finder and OJEU advert go live for procurement. | |

| | |
|---|--|
| ITT documents uploaded and live on In-Tend (e-procurement portal) | |
| Bidder question & clarification period closes | |
| Return date for tenders | |
| Evaluation Timescales | |
| Evaluation by NHSE. Individual Evaluation Comments completed by members of the evaluation panel | |
| Evaluation Meeting and any Clarification Questions | |
| Identify Preferred Bidder per Lot | |
| Contract Start | |
| Contract Awarded and development of relevant contract documentation | |
| Mobilisation Period | |
| Delivery of Programme | |

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Any prospective bidder who directly or indirectly attempts to canvass employees of NHSE or their professional advisers in order to gain unfair favour concerning the award of the contract will be immediately disqualified from the process.

Confidentiality

The recipient indicates by accepting this document their agreement to comply with the following:

(a) that they shall keep permanently confidential the information contained herein or sent herewith or made available in connection with further enquiries (in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2005), and

(b) that they shall not divulge or communicate to any person (other than those whose province it is to know the same or with the permission of the NHSE or where a joint response with another Education Provider is requested) any such information, and

(c) that they shall ensure that their employees, agents, and sub-contractors comply with the same principles.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

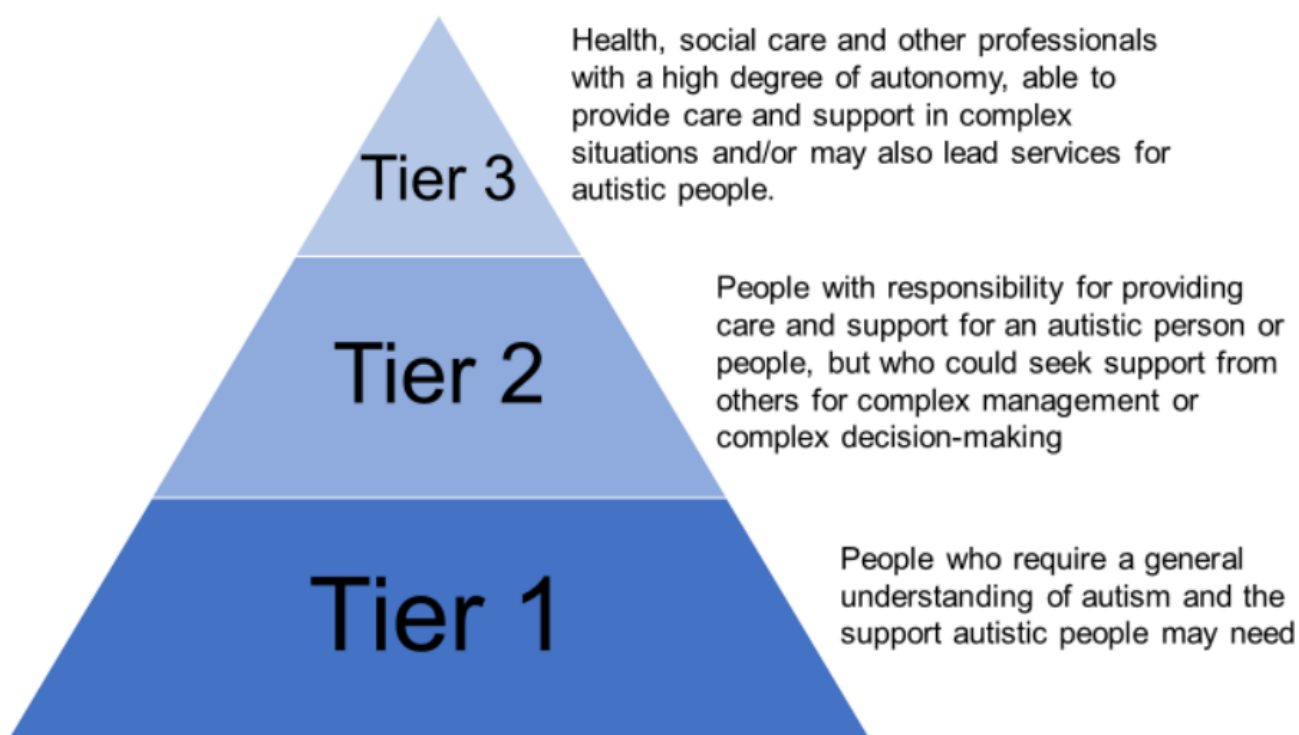
Submissions will be subject to the FOIA. All information submitted will be treated as 'commercial in confidence' during the tender process.

Potential providers should be aware of NHSE's obligations and responsibilities under the FOIA to disclose on request recorded information held by NHSE provided by potential providers in connection with this procurement exercise, or with any contract that may be awarded as a result of this exercise, unless it considers one of the statutory exemptions under FOIA applies.

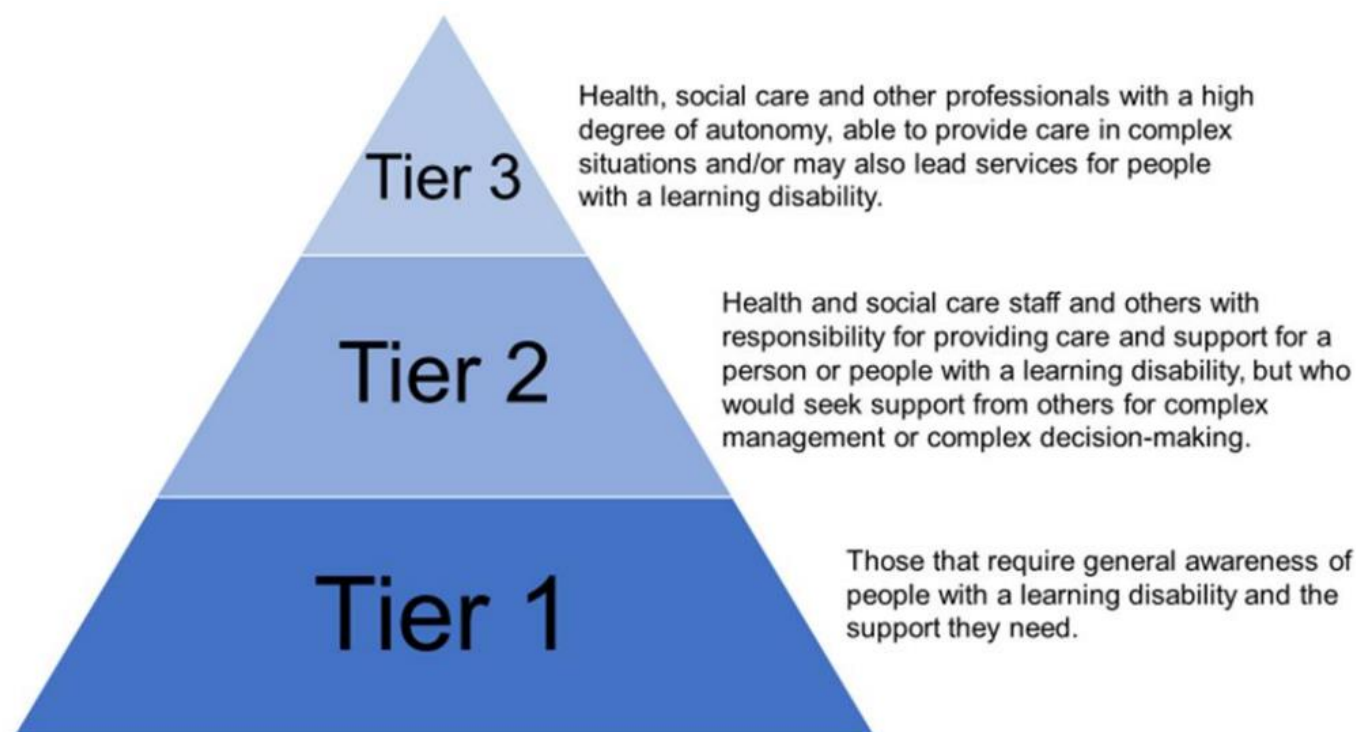
Appendix 1: Capabilities Frameworks

The Skills for Health 2019 [Learning Disability and Autism Capabilities Frameworks](#) describes capabilities i.e., the attributes (skills, knowledge, and behaviours) which people bring to their work. This includes the ability to be competent and beyond this, to manage change, be flexible, deal with situations which may be unpredictable and continue to improve performance. The frameworks begin with a description of the values and behaviours which underpin all capabilities in the framework. They set out the essential capabilities necessary for all staff involved in supporting people with a learning disability and autistic people across their lifespan. The capabilities described in the framework are therefore defined at 3 tiers:

Autism:



Learning Disability:



Tier 3 is relevant to staff working intensively with autistic people and people with a learning disability, including those who take a lead in decision making, practice management, commissioning and developing or disseminating good practice. The Tier 3 framework category requires a high degree of autonomy and corresponds to the advanced and consultant level of practice.

Systems report challenges attracting and retaining staff inclusive of a more specialist workforce, also many of the unregistered workforce do not have the correct skillset and values to care and support autistic people and people with a learning disability. Recent data suggests 58% of the workforce in adult inpatient services and 60% in children and young people (CYP) inpatient services is unregistered support staff. The Programme has undertaken recent safe and wellbeing reviews which highlight challenges with capacity, capability, and vacancies, in addition, to high levels of agency usage which in turn has negative consequences for autistic people and people with a learning disability.

A workforce that understands the broader needs of people with a learning disability and autistic people and that can implement the [reasonable adjustments](#) needed is essential. Therefore, the creation of a more specialist and skilled workforce, capable of providing extra support where required including in people's homes, in community settings or in inpatient services, is critical in reducing health inequalities, premature death and inappropriate hospital admissions amongst people with a learning disability and autistic people.

It is well documented that the workforce supporting people with a learning disability and autistic people has been in decline both in quality and size. Evidence tells us that with higher rates of prevalence for learning disability and autism, greater emphasis is required on bespoke



NHS England Specification

workforce development, education, training, and a sustainable approach for the workforce supporting and caring for autistic people and people with a learning disability.