



Improving mental health support for autistic people

Dr Conor Davidson, consultant psychiatrist

October 2019

Please note – these slides are for background information only and will not necessarily match the slides in the presentation

making a

difference

together

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys



NHS Foundation Trust

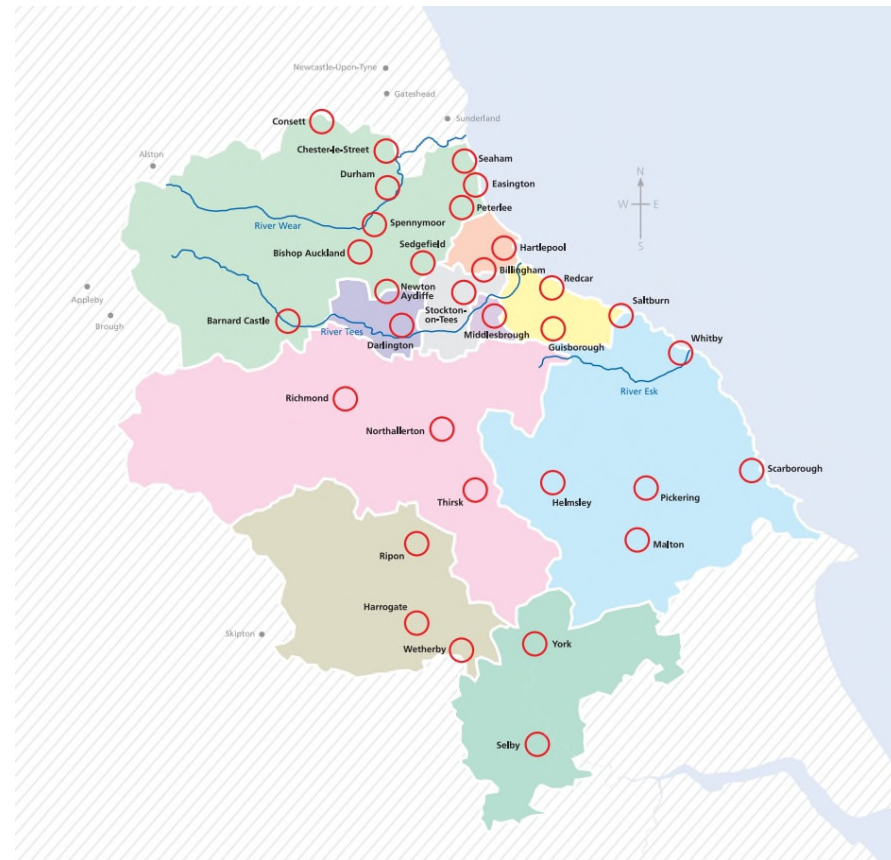
About the trust:

One of the largest MH trusts in the country

4000 sq miles

1.4m population

7000 staff



making a

difference

together

Why should autism be the business of mental health services

- Autism is common – 1.1% of population
- Mental health problems are very common in autism – over half of autistic adults will have at least one MH disorder
- Rates of autism in psychiatric patients – at least 4%
- Risk – rates of suicide 7-9 times higher in autism
- Complexity – Multiple physical and mental health issues, social problems, at risk of long psychiatric hospital admissions

Issues in our trust pre 2017

- Too many autistic people 'falling through the gaps' in services
- Serious incidents and complaints involving autistic patients
- Long waiting lists for autism assessment
- Patchy post-diagnostic follow-up
- Clinicians feeling unskilled and unsupported in managing autistic patients
- Most patients not being offered reasonable adjustments
- At times, a culture of 'autism is not my business'

Trustwide autism project

- Launched in March 2017
- With aim of implementing recommendations of 'think autism' guidance across the trust

Autism Project timeline



making a

difference

together



TEWV autism framework

- Involve service users and carers in all aspects of autism work
- Where TEWV provides specialist autism diagnostic services, they should be of a high standard.
- All TEWV staff should be trained in autism awareness, and relevant clinical staff trained to a higher level of autism expertise.
- TEWV staff should understand the impact of autism on mental health, and be able to make reasonable adjustments where necessary.
- There should be a consistent, high quality transition plan for young people with autism when they move from childhood into adulthood.

making a

difference

together



TEWV's autism ambition

Autistic people should have equal access to mental health and learning disability services, and be treated by autism-aware staff who are able to make reasonable adjustments when required. Our ambition is to be the most autism-friendly NHS organisation in the North of England.

making a

difference

together

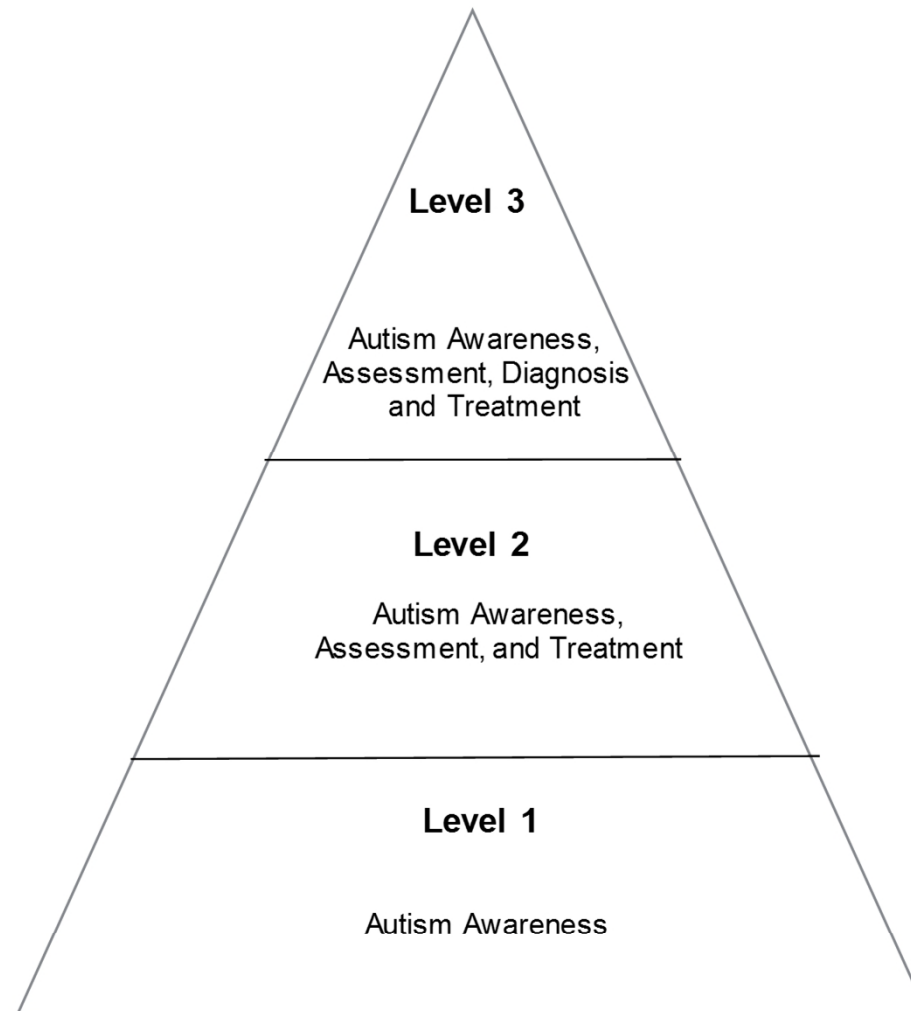
Autism Project timeline



making a

difference

together



AUTISM TRAINING MATRIX

Level 1 All staff

Level 2 All clinical staff

Level 3 Key decision makers

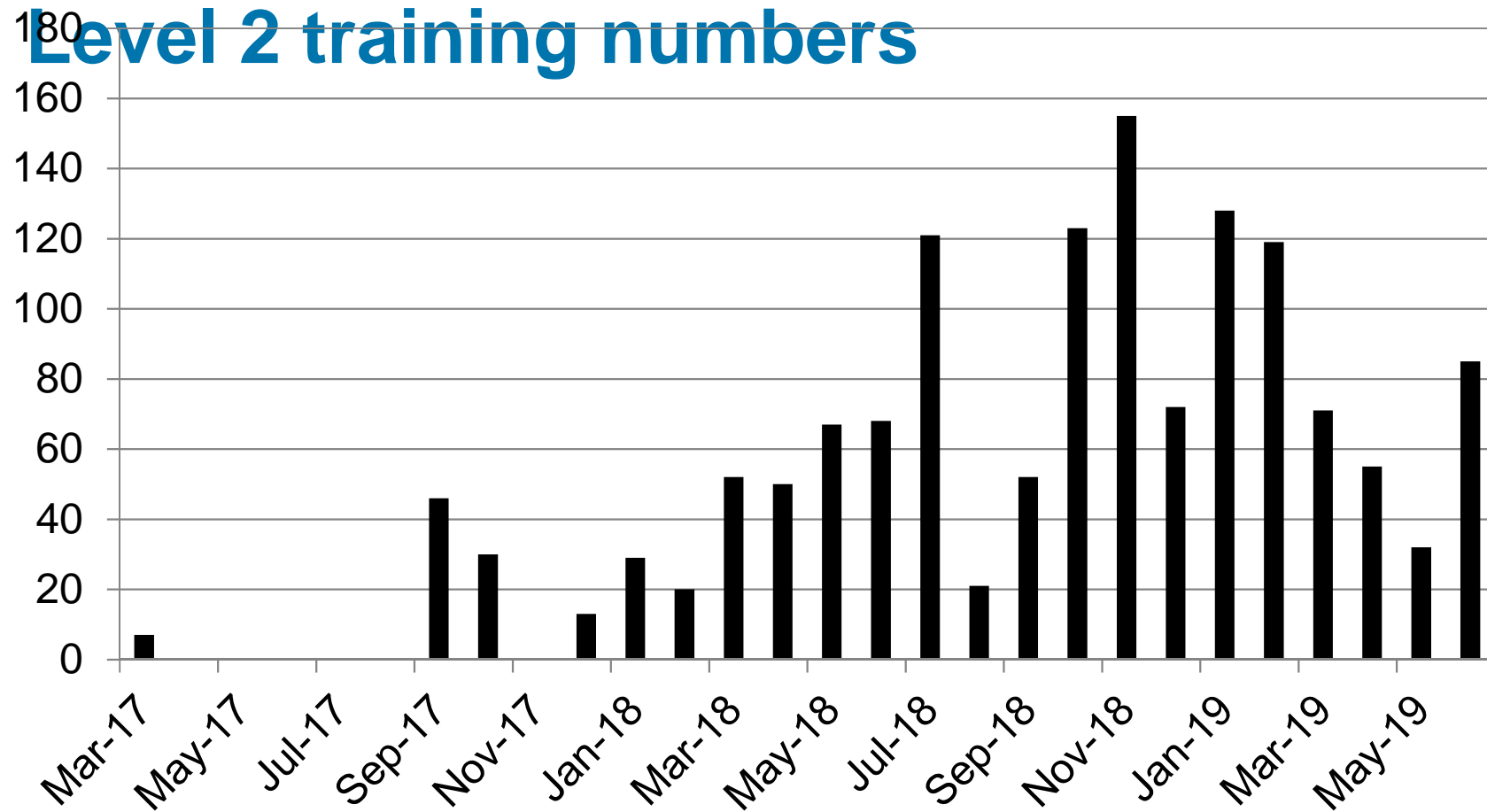


making a

difference

together

Level 2 training numbers



making a

difference

together

As of end of June 2019:
1416 staff trained in
level 2 *understanding*
autism
(total eligible clinical
staff \approx 5500)



making a

difference

together

Training feedback

Question	Percentage agree
The training was relevant to my work	96.6%
The content was at about the right level	98.9%
The material was well organised	98.7%
The presenter appeared well-informed	99.5%
The presenter was enthusiastic about the subject	99.7%
Overall this teaching was of a high quality	99.5%

Longer time for
carer/service user

Having real patients and
carers share their
experiences is extremely
helpful

Extremely informative and
useful to my practice

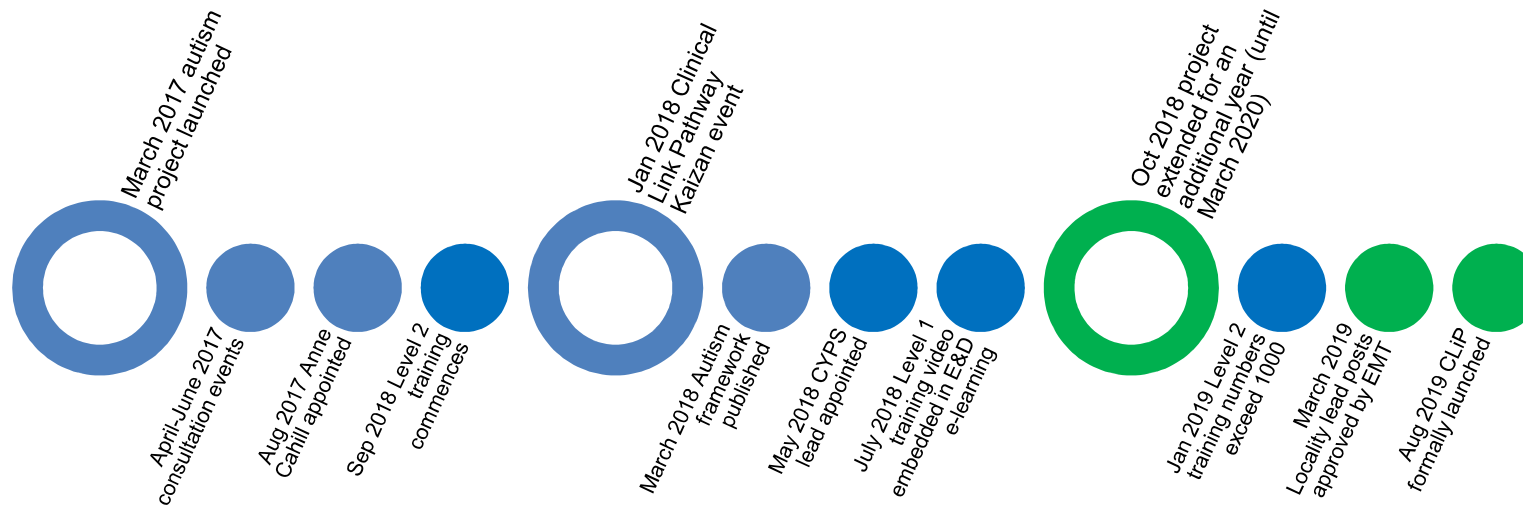
Showed how to
make
reasonable
adjustments

So well delivered,
very candid

The tips and hints very
useful, service user
involvement and carer
involvement extremely
beneficial

Too much information
in too short a time, all
relevant but mind
boggling

Autism Project timeline



Autism Clinical Link Pathway

- A suite of resources to advise and support clinicians treating mental health issues in autistic patients
- Includes information leaflets, questionnaires, clinical tools, signposting guides
- Ultimately will be seamlessly accessible via trust clinical software

Challenges

- Vast geography of TEWV footprint
- Large numbers of staff and services
- Financial austerity
- Commissioning arrangements not helpful
- CMHTs overwhelmed already
- Demand continually rising for specialist autism services
- Limited pool of expert clinicians
- How to best provide specialist consultancy?

The future

- Hopefully extend project by another year
- Embed autism training update sessions
- Roll out CLiP trustwide
- Autism locality lead posts – clinical and managerial
- Specialty autism leads?
- More role for CMHTs in assessment?

Get in touch



Autism project email:
zoe.wilkinson5@nhs.net



[@conor_davidson](https://twitter.com/conor_davidson)

[#TEWVautismaware](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TEWVautismaware)

TEWV autism project team
0191 4510004