AUTISM PASSPORT – ABOUT ME
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Background:
Autism spectrum disorders pose challenges that are often multi-faceted and sometimes complex. The nature of autism requires a range of professionals to work together to ensure that needs are properly assessed.
The inspiration for the Autism Passport (About Me) came from the often quoted dissatisfaction of parents and professionals with the diagnostic process around autism.
In September 2011, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) published Autism: Recognition, referral and diagnosis of children and young people on the autism spectrum guidelines. The guidelines made clear recommendations as to how families could be better informed and supported through the autism diagnostic process.
Our experiences and local research fitted with these recommendations and this provided the impetus to develop this passport to help address these and other relevant issues.

Development:
This Autism Passport (About Me) was developed with advice and support from professionals involved in the diagnostic assessment process and most significantly with advice and support from parents and young people. Families and children/young people with a diagnosis of autism were at the centre of this project and were involved from the outset in the development of the passport.
The parent and carer consultation group provided input into the design, content and layout of this passport and the children/young people designed the logo for the passport. Particular attention was paid to details such as the colours used for the passport, text, and layouts keeping in mind the sensory profile of children/young people with autism.
The aim of the passport was to clearly describe and inform families about the diagnostic process. It was envisaged that this would help them in their journey through the assessment process. A group of professionals from health, education, social services and the voluntary sector were also consulted at all stages during the development of this passport.
The project was funded by the Welsh Government and will be piloted in the Aneurin Bevan Health Board. The input from children/young people suggested that the passport should be made available in a paper and electronic form (encrypted USB stick). Our goal was to make the passport accessible and to keep abreast with modern technology.

Summary of Features:
1) Clear visual description and flowchart of assessment process.
2) A record of assessments to track progress through process
3) Details on local services and professionals involved
4) Contact details for case co-ordinator.
5) Information about local and national services.
6) Outcome of assessment and signposting.

A brief passport is also included which is a one page brief document for the family and children/young people to use across all settings e.g. on holiday, for hospital visits etc.
**Vision:**
The Autism Passport is a product of the inspiration and dissatisfaction expressed by families and professionals about the autism diagnostic process and will help to improve experiences of this process for everyone involved. It is a good fit of our experiences, research and NICE recommendations. It has been developed collaboratively with service users to help them in their daily life.

It is designed to support parents and children/young people to access, “hold” and share information. It is envisaged that this information can be updated regularly as appropriate and support transition between services at different stages. Parents had expressed frustration with having to “repeat developmental histories and concerns”. Holding a personal, easily accessible and accurate record will address these frustrations and support improved planning and management thereby reducing stress for everyone.

The Autism Passport (About Me) provides a low cost solution to well known information sharing issues and should reduce stress and anxiety for families and children.

**Quotes by parents about the passport:**

“I do think that a passport is useful as it focuses the mind on what is positive and, in the absence of a care pathway for autism, attempts to steer a way through for the benefit of child and parent. There was so much negativity at the point of my son’s diagnosis that I would have welcomed any approach that viewed my son as a child rather than a problem.”

“As main carer I have always done the school meetings, hospital appointments etc and to recall everything all the time is really hard sometimes as there is so much going on in our lives.”