



## AET Advisory Council - an introduction

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### Vision

The Autism Education Trust believes that all children and young people with autism<sup>1</sup> should receive an education which enables them to reach their individual potential to engage in society as active citizens (and that individuals, families and professionals are informed, supported and equipped to enable this to be achieved).

### What is the Advisory Council?

An essential element of the Autism Education Trust (AET) governance is the establishment of the AET Advisory Council. The Council will be made up of representatives of key interest groups and will advise the Steering Group<sup>2</sup> on plans and issues. An Advisory Council is essential in order to make the Autism Education Trust as inclusive and transparent as possible.

The success of the AET will depend on cooperation from local government, service providers and service users, including children and young people on the autism spectrum and their families and carers. The Advisory Council and its sub-group structures, the on-line advisory groups, are the principal means for the AET to actively engage with these key interest groups.

Once the Advisory Council has been established on-line advisory groups will be created to provide for discussion on an ongoing basis. These will exist both by region and by interest group. Advisory Council members will act as a point of liaison between the advisory groups and the AET Steering Group.

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<sup>1</sup> The term autism refers to all those on the autism spectrum including Asperger syndrome.

<sup>2</sup> The role of the AET Steering Group is to ensure that the work of the trust reflects the strategy agreed in consultation with the Advisory Council and other stakeholders and makes a real impact in pursuit of its vision and mission. Further details of the Steering Group, including its Terms of Reference and composition can be found at [www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk).

## Overall remit

1. To advise the AET Steering Group on particular areas of interest associated with the delivery of the AET programme of work and the wider remit of the AET.
2. To advise government, commissioners and providers on examples of effective practice.
3. To promote the AET to its wider networks as a platform for information sharing and raising awareness.

## Terms of Reference

- To provide expert advice and guidance to the Steering Group
- To provide a breadth and depth of experience in relation to autism and use that expertise to help the AET improve education for children on the autism spectrum and their families.
- To share examples of good practice with the Autism community through the AET
- To be actively involved with the groups they are representative of, whether in person, or as part of one of the AET's virtual online communities.
- To engage and encourage participation in the on-line Advisory Groups.

## Participation

The AET has invited applications from anyone interested in the participating in the Advisory Council. In order that the council is representative of the range of people involved in the education of children and young people on the autism spectrum the AET sought representatives from the following categories:

- An adult on the autism spectrum
- A young adult (18-24) on the autism spectrum
- A parent / carer of a child on the autism spectrum
- An educational psychologist
- A paediatrician with expertise in the autism spectrum
- A speech and language therapist
- A teacher in a mainstream school without a special unit
- A teacher in a mainstream school with a special unit
- A teacher in an autism-specific school
- A teacher in an independent school
- A local authority Special Educational Needs advisor
- A participation worker / consultant
- A young adult sibling of a person on the autism spectrum
- An SEN school governor
- An early years / nursery school teacher
- A learning support assistant / teaching assistant
- A lunchtime supervisor
- An extended schools provider

The ideal Council would also have:

- Members from a wide geographical spread across England;
- A satisfactory gender and diversity mix;
- At least two members who have autism;
- A mix of parents who have a child and an adult family member with autism;
- A mix of parents who have a family member with low and high functioning/cognitive capacity;
- Members representing a broad range of ages.

Advisory Council participants need to be able to commit to attending at least three meetings a year (locations will vary around the country) on a voluntary basis and may be requested to attend the AET Steering Committee meetings and other AET events occasionally. Between meetings Council members should be willing to work actively to promote the AET within the groups they are representative of, as well as providing input and feedback to the AET on ongoing work.

The AET will also be recruiting a regional representative to moderate the on-line advisory group forums and to represent the views of the forum on the Advisory Council. Anyone interested in applying for this position (estimated at 16 hours per week) should contact the AET at [info@autismeducationtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@autismeducationtrust.org.uk).