

Axia-ASD.co.uk

Annual Report 2017

Who are Axia ASD?

Dr Linda Buchan is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist who qualified in 1978. Linda has a forty-year experience within the field of Autism Spectrum Disorder; first within Learning Disability Services and for the latter part of her career within Autism/Asperger's-specific services, before retiring from the NHS in 2008.



Axia ASD Ltd was originally formed in 1993 by Linda and her late partner, Albert. Since Linda's retirement from the NHS, Axia has grown and evolved to its current position as an independent provider of services to the NHS and diagnostic pathway for various Clinical Commissioning Groups. For adults, Axia is the diagnostic pathway for NHS Eastern Cheshire, South Cheshire, Vale Royal and Salford. Axia recently won the tender for diagnostic services of Autism Spectrum Disorder in North Wales Child and Adolescent Services. Axia also accepts private healthcare and self-referrals for the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, Dyspraxia/Developmental Coordination Difficulties and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

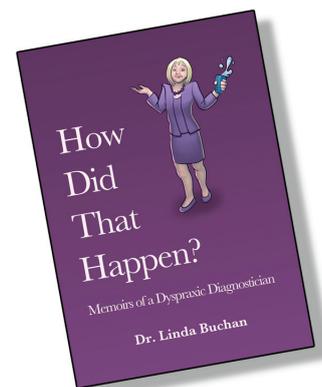


Axia is proud of its experienced and diverse Multidisciplinary Team. The diagnostic and post-diagnostic support team includes professionals in Clinical Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Systemic Family Therapy, Mental Health Nursing and prestigious trainers, researchers and authors in the field of Autism. There are a wide range of special interests amongst the team including the female presentation of Autism, catatonia, interpersonal/relational challenges, and issues around education and employment. Further, Axia has highly skilled administrative support, IT/media support, a Clinical Support Worker, and self-professed 'Nerd Consultants'. 'Nerd Consultants' support the understanding of, and engagement in, special interests such as film, TV, gaming, Anime and Manga amongst the team and with those accessing the service.



(Top row from left to right: Dr Linda Buchan, Carly Bailey, Sue Power, David Reiser, Gail Pirie, Elspeth Bromiley, Dream; Bottom row from left to right: Reece Imiolek, Calvin Atkinson, Renwick Bromiley, Elliot Chapman)

Axia ASD Ltd prides itself on its neurodiversity, having people with Autism, Dyspraxia, Dyslexia and Irlen's Syndrome amongst its staff team. This speaks to Axia's firm belief in, and endorsement of, the skills and strengths that exist as part of neurodiversity. Linda herself has written a book entitled, "Memoirs of a Dyspraxic Diagnostician".



From its small beginnings to today, Axia has diagnosed thousands of individuals with Autism. Brief individualised post-diagnostic support is available for those receiving diagnoses at Axia, as well as a rolling post-diagnostic support group for adults. Individuals may also access (self-funded and NHS-funded options) complex psychological/psychotherapeutic interventions where appropriate. All interventions are tailored specifically to the needs and preferences of the individual/family, and adapted to suit their strengths and challenges.

The team at Axia work on a strengths-based model of Autism and neurodiversity. That is, recognising the skills and potential of individuals they meet, while addressing barriers to thriving. Axia always works in partnership with individuals, providing a non-judgemental, empathic and collaborative understanding of the different manifestations of neurodiversity such as Autism.

"Value in Partnership"

Axia is committed to increasing broader awareness and education in the field of Autism, for example in sponsoring, presenting at, and providing conferences. In addition, Axia can support training/placements in the healthcare professions, for example in Clinical Psychology training. Axia recognises the value of social and mass media, readily engaging at these levels to promote awareness and education around neurodiversity.

Why produce this report?

Axia ASD felt it important to begin the annual capturing and reporting of successes, challenges and future service plans. This document outlines a number of quality indicators that Axia deem important to ensure that the highest quality service continues to be available to those who use it.

Assessment and diagnosis in 2017

Figures

- In 2017 we met with 558 individuals for neurodevelopmental assessments. 33 individuals did not attend their arranged session. This is just a 5.6% DNA (Did Not Attend) rate.
- Compared with 2016, we had a 33% increase in assessments undertaken, and DNA rates remained stable at less than 6%.
- We are proud that throughout 2017 our waiting time to be seen for assessment was 9-10 weeks. This is below the national guidelines of 3 months waiting time.
- In addition, waiting times between assessment and receipt of the assessment report was 3-4 weeks.
- Of the 558 individuals seen for assessment, 171 were children and adolescents funded through North Wales CAMHS, 87 were adults funded through Salford CCG, and 135 were funded through Cheshire CCGs. In addition, 7 were funded through other CCGs, and 158 were privately funded individuals.



Our clients' experience

We regularly seek feedback on our clients' experiences through a range of means, including postal feedback forms, social media and our website. Some of our invaluable client feedback around assessment/diagnosis in 2017 included:

"Found the whole process very positive and helpful. I'm pleased I decided to get a diagnosis and really glad I chose Axia ASD Ltd. I feel I've got a better understanding of myself."

Client.

"To All at Axia, thank you for providing such a great service which continues to support me to reach heights I would never have thought I would reach. I am beyond grateful to you all."

Client.

"The assessment was very professional, well organised and thorough. I informed our GP of the high level of service we had received from Axia."

Client.

"Thank you for believing in me and giving me the diagnosis. I can now live my life knowing that it is alright to be wired differently. Onwards and upwards. Thank you for posting out such a detailed report and enclosing the websites, etc. Linda has changed my life."

Client.

"I just wanted to message to say thank you to the two ladies and the speech therapist who saw me and my son yesterday. They really couldn't have been more helpful, understanding and knowledgeable. I wish all 'professionals' were like the staff there. Thank you so much again."

Client.

Further to this encouraging feedback, Axia received only one complaint in 2017. This was resolved to the clients satisfaction and procedures were amended accordingly.

We care immensely about the impact of diagnosis on people's lives. We work in partnership during any interaction and always ask the individual/family their reactions to diagnosis. In 2013 a thematic analysis of reactions to diagnosis at Axia was undertaken, establishing the following themes:

- Understanding of self
- Closure and relief
- Loss and regret of not having diagnosis earlier
- Emotional
- Hope for the future
- Confirmation of suspicions
- Unsure of diagnosis

Since this time and throughout 2017, diagnostic reports were regularly reviewed against these themes. The themes continue to capture people's experience on immediately receiving diagnoses at Axia.

Plans for 2018

In 2018 we aim to explore the data we capture and report on. This may allow new, interesting and important insights, locally and generally in the field of neurodevelopmental difference. For example, rates and types of employment, rates of mental health difficulties, and special skills/interests amongst the people we meet. Further, we will collate the diagnoses given, within age, gender and locality demographics.

We will also continue to seek and use qualitative information from the people we meet, to continue to monitor the quality of our services.

Post-diagnostic support

1:1 follow-up sessions

Our 1:1 sessions provide a space for people who have been diagnosed by Axia to reflect on their reactions to the diagnosis, ask any further questions and seek advice on further signposting or support if needed.

In 2017, 352 individuals attended for follow-up sessions, 92 of these were privately funded. 130 adults from Cheshire CCGs attended their invitation for follow-up, with an 8.2% DNA rate. 53 adults from Salford CCG attended their follow-up invitation, with a 9.37% DNA rate. 77 children and adolescents from North Wales CAMHS attended follow-up, with an 11.22% DNA rate.

Though we still consider these to be low DNA rates, we have follow-up sessions available over telephone and Skype where travel to Axia is difficult, and we are considering other post-diagnostic support options.

Signposting

In 2017 we continued to signpost people for support to organisations which we know and trust. We are committed to remaining abreast of supportive organisations and resources and sharing these as appropriate with our clients. We have details of national and local supports, as well as lists of resources available on our website, Facebook page, and on request to enquiries@axia-asd.co.uk.

Post-diagnostic support group

- Our post-diagnostic support group is available free for adults, or relatives of adults, who have had some level of service contact with Axia ASD Ltd.
- We pride ourselves on having autism professionals (external and from Axia) present on a range of autism-related topics. In 2017 our presentations topics included managing relationships, emotional regulation, employment for people on the spectrum, living with sensory sensitivities, and managing rigid thinking styles.
- Our post-diagnostic support group has been developed in partnership (co-produced) with group members. It usually has around 40 members and runs every 4-6 weeks.

Innovative ways of connecting

We connect with the people we see in a range of ways including Facebook, Twitter, our website, our Film Society, and our Anime Amigos. The work of our Film Society and Anime Amigos is made available on the website and social media, and always discussed at our group.

What our members said about the group in 2017:

"[It offers] a feeling of belonging and acceptance. I feel more accepting of myself and have a much deeper understanding of myself and my sons."

Group member.

"The sessions have had a positive effect on my life, as I have made new friends."

Group member.

"Useful. Particularly having "casual" access to professionals who FULLY understand difficulties!!"

Group member.

"The talks have always been interesting."

Group member.

"[Its] given me the courage to talk openly about being autistic – and every time I do so, someone benefits. Someone talks about their own experience with family/friends and very often people ask questions about themselves. It makes connections."

Group member.

"In the past I have found some [sessions] more stressful than others, however I've survived them all, which I feel has aided in increasing my self-esteem to a degree."

Group member.

Other business

A new Open Room afternoon on Wednesdays in our Anime Room. This is a space for people who have had contact with Axia to hang out with Ren, Cal, Reece and Elliot. Those who come along can hang out, play games, and talk interests (including Anime, Manga, film and TV).

We are reviewing our post-diagnostic support options. We are considering small groups of recently diagnosed individuals to access information around a specific theme or issue, for example parenting a child with autism, or employment and autism. This could be offered as an alternative to the 1:1 follow up session.

We will continue to request and utilise feedback from our group to help us to meet the needs of members.

Plans for 2018

In 2017 there were a number of important tasks Axia were involved in which support the understanding, awareness, practice and research in the field of neurodevelopmental difference. These included:

- Sponsoring the 2017 National Autistic Society conference.
- Welcoming Sarah Hendrickx, established academic, author and researcher in the field of autism, into our growing Multidisciplinary Team.
- Continued work and links with partner organisations such as the National Autistic Society, Chaps, Salford Autism, and North-West Universities.
- Links with local training courses, including providing a specialist placement for the University of Liverpool Clinical Psychology Doctorate, and a presence at the Chester University Undergraduate Careers Conference.
- Continued online and social media presence, sharing recent articles and knowledge in the field of autism and other neurodevelopmental differences.
- Continued review of how we engage in a relevant way with individuals e.g. incorporating technology into our assessment and support sessions.



Closing comments

2018 is set to be an exciting year for Axia. Upcoming plans and events include:

- Our nomination for the National Autistic Society Professionals Award for Outstanding Health Services.
- Our annual conference on 21st September 2018. Speakers here will include David Reiser, Sarah Hendrickx, Luke Beardon and Ronnie Hunt. See flyer on following page.
- Our new Open Room afternoons – a space for people to hang out/play games with Cal, Ren and others with shared interests in Anime, Manga, board games, film and TV. Every Wednesday at the Anime Room, Axia, Red Hill House, Chester.
- Continued work and fun with Anime Amigos (Ren, Cal, Elliot and Reece), posted regularly on our website/social media.
- Piloting organisational training sessions with a local gym, with a view to assessing feasibility, and helping communities to adjust for neurodevelopmental differences.
- Recruiting our new, vastly experienced team members who will include:
Sue Power, Education Lead and Administrator
Ms Sheena Mansell, Clinical Psychologist
Dr Lynn Rollinson, Clinical Psychologist
Amy Buchan, Administrative Assistant

For any further information about anything in this report then please consult our:

Website: www.axia-asd.co.uk

Facebook page: www.facebook.com/AxiaASDLtd

Twitter: twitter.com/AxiaASD

Or contact our team on:

enquiries@axia-asd.co.uk

Tel. 01244 56 76 56

Axia-ASD.co.uk

Axia-ASD.co.uk

Presents

AUTISM

PEOPLE BEHIND THE MASKS

Hidden Truths & Exploring Myths

Perspectives of Adults
& Parents of Children

Question & Answer Session

Workshops



LUKE
BEARDON



RONNIE
HUNT



SARAH
HENDRICKX



DAVID
REISER

21st September 2018 @ 9:15am
Chester Racecourse

To book contact Carly on
01244 56 76 56
or email enquiries@axia-asd.co.uk

Pricing: £50 for people in receipt of benefits
£100 Early bird rate • £150 Delegate rate • £100 for exhibition stand.