

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

NICE Quality Standards Consultation – Autism in children, young people and adults

Closing date: 5pm – Monday 30 September 2013

Organisation	Optical Confederation
Title (e.g. Dr, Mr, Ms, Prof)	Mr
Name	Geoff Roberson
Job title or role	Professional Adviser, Association of Optometrists
Address and post code	2 Woodbridge Street London EC1R 0DG
Telephone number	020 7549 2034
Email address	geoffroberson@aop.org.uk
Please note: comments submitted on the draft quality standard are published on the NICE website.	
Would your organisation like to express an interest in endorsing this quality standard? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
For information about endorsing quality standards please visit http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qualitystandards/indevelopment	

The personal data submitted on this form will be used by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) for the purpose specified. The information will not be passed to any other third party and will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Please provide comments on the draft quality standard on the form below, putting each new comment in a new row. When feeding back, please note the section you are commenting on (for example, section 1 Introduction). If commenting on a specific quality statement, please indicate the particular sub-section (for example, statement, measure or audience descriptor). If your comment relates to the standard as a whole then please put 'general'.

In order to guide your comments, please refer to the general points for consideration on the NICE website as well as the specific questions detailed within the quality standard.

Please add rows as necessary.

Section	Comments
e.g. Section 1 Introduction or quality statement 1 (measure)	e.g. Comment about quality statement 1.
General	<p>This is a joint response from the Optical Confederation, and the Local Optical Committee Support Unit. The Local Optical Committee Support Unit (LOCSU) provides quality, practical support to Local Optical Committees in England, to help them to develop and implement local objectives, in respect of primary eye care services. LOCSU has developed a number of eye care pathways including cataract and low vision to provide expert advice, associated business cases, clinical training packages and implementation tools to assist with the commissioning of these pathways. For more information, please visit: www.locsu.co.uk</p> <p>The Optical Confederation represents the 12,000 optometrists, the 6,000 dispensing opticians, and 7,000 optical businesses and 45,000 ancillary staff in the UK, who provide high quality and accessible eye care services to the whole population. The Confederation is a coalition of five optical representative bodies: the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO), the Association of Contact Lens Manufacturers (ACLM), the Association of Optometrists (AOP), the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians (FMO) and the Federation of Opticians (FODO). As a Confederation, we work with others to improve eye health for the public good.</p>

Section	Comments
	<p>The Optical Confederation responded to the NICE consultation on both the guideline; <i>Autism diagnosis in children and young people</i>, and the guideline; <i>Autism: recognition, referral, diagnosis and management of adults on the autism spectrum</i> encouraging the inclusion of vision assessments into the assessment of people with Autism. We were pleased to see that both guidelines recognised the need for the identification and correction of vision defects if they existed.</p>
<p>Quality Statement 2</p> <p>What the quality statement means for service providers, health professionals and social care practitioners, and commissioners</p>	<p>The Optical Confederation works closely with charities such as SeeAbility who provide specialist services for people with learning disabilities, autism, acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy, and epilepsy. The vast majority of the people supported by SeeAbility also suffer from a visual impairment. Despite being more prevalent amongst people with learning disabilities, such as autism, visual impairment is all too often undetected in such people, adding to their sense of isolation and frustration. It is crucial that support staff working with people with both sight loss and autism, are able to use effective and individualised strategies.</p> <p>We recognise that people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) face challenges with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Invasion of personal space • Disruption of routine • Introduction of strangers • Introduction of equipment <p>As recognised in both the guideline; <i>Autism diagnosis in children and young people</i>, and the guideline; <i>Autism: recognition, referral, diagnosis and management of adults on the autism spectrum</i>, the identification and correction of visual defects is important in the care and support of people with ASD. We welcome the inclusion in Quality Standard 2 of a requirement to ensure that as part of a diagnostic assessment for autism, people are assessed for</p>

Section	Comments
	<p>“coexisting physical health conditions and mental health problems” and particularly welcome the inclusion of vision or hearing impairment in the definition of functional problems and disorders. However, we have concerns that the quality standard is not specific enough to ensure that these necessary assessments will actually take place. Unfortunately the two guidelines from which the quality standard is derived are, we believe, rather vague in their requirements. Indeed in the Autism diagnosis in children and young people guideline Social interaction and communication behaviours section, reduced or absent eye contact can only be determined if it is based on an assumption of adequate vision. We do not believe this provides sufficient encouragement to health and social care organisations to ensure that physical impairments such as reduced vision are properly identified.</p> <p>The Local Optical Committee Support Unit (LOCSU) has developed a pathway for a specialist sight test (or community eye service) for people with autism and other learning disabilities. The pathway is designed to provide information, support and improve access to eye care services, thus ensuring that people with autism have good vision (with refractive correction supplied, as appropriate) and that any sight-threatening problems are detected and treated at an early stage. People with autism often require longer appointment times and several visits to the optical practice to become familiar with the environment and may need additional time with the optometrist so that the results of the eye examination can be explained. Information obtained during such an assessment could and should then be fed back to other health and social care professionals involved in the care of that person.</p> <p>We believe that the quality standard should be much more specific about the assessment of relevant physical impairments, such as defects of vision that might impact on a person with ASD. We would be willing and delighted to work with NICE, the Department of Health, NHS England and CCG’s to determine a more formal pathway for the assessment of people with ASD to ensure that vision is formally assessed, defects are identified and corrected, and the results used to ensure the best care is provided for that person.</p>

Section	Comments

Closing date: Please forward this electronically by 5pm on **Monday 30 September** at the very latest to QSconsultations@nice.org.uk

PLEASE NOTE: The Institute reserves the right to summarise and edit comments received during consultations, or not to publish them at all, where in the reasonable opinion of the Institute, the comments are voluminous, publication would be unlawful or publication would be otherwise inappropriate.