

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Dec 2008

Implementation of the ASD Guideline has required significant commitment from many people across the sector. This newsletter brings together information from some of the key groups who have been involved, and their updates or links to updates are included in this newsletter.

These groups include:

- 1) Ministry of Health
- 2) Ministry of Education
- 3) New Zealand Guidelines Group and the Implementation Advisory Group
- 4) Altogether Autism
- 5) Autism New Zealand

1) News from the Ministry of Health

- In line with the directives approved by Cabinet in 2007 the Ministries of Health and Education have been working with the New Zealand Guidelines Group (NZGG) to complete the implementation plan within the broad priorities set by the Implementation Advisory Group.
- We are pleased to announce that the Ministry of Health has been given approval to allocate funding for improving services in line with the recommendations of the New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline.

Prioritisation and Allocation Process

The New Zealand Guidelines Group is contracted to support the implementation process. The New Zealand Guidelines Group established an implementation advisory group, made up from people who have experience of living with autism and/or supporting people living with autism. This includes family/whanau, professional carers, people working in support organisations clinicians and educators.

NZGG have worked closely with the Implementation Advisory Group to determine the priorities for the allocation of funding. These priorities were:

- 1) Assessment and diagnosis
- 2) Support for families
- 3) Interventions (including early intervention and behaviour support to strengthen families, and transitions)
- 4) Respite

Improving co-ordination and developing the workforce flows through all of the above priorities.

A brief analysis of the services provided and work activity currently underway in these areas was completed, which focused on support for individuals, families and carers. The result of this work then informed two further prioritisation discussions:

- i. with the IAG on 14 August 2008
<http://www.nzgg.org.nz/download/files/ASDTechnicalInformationService-1.pdf>
- ii. with the Ministry of Health on 18 August 2008.

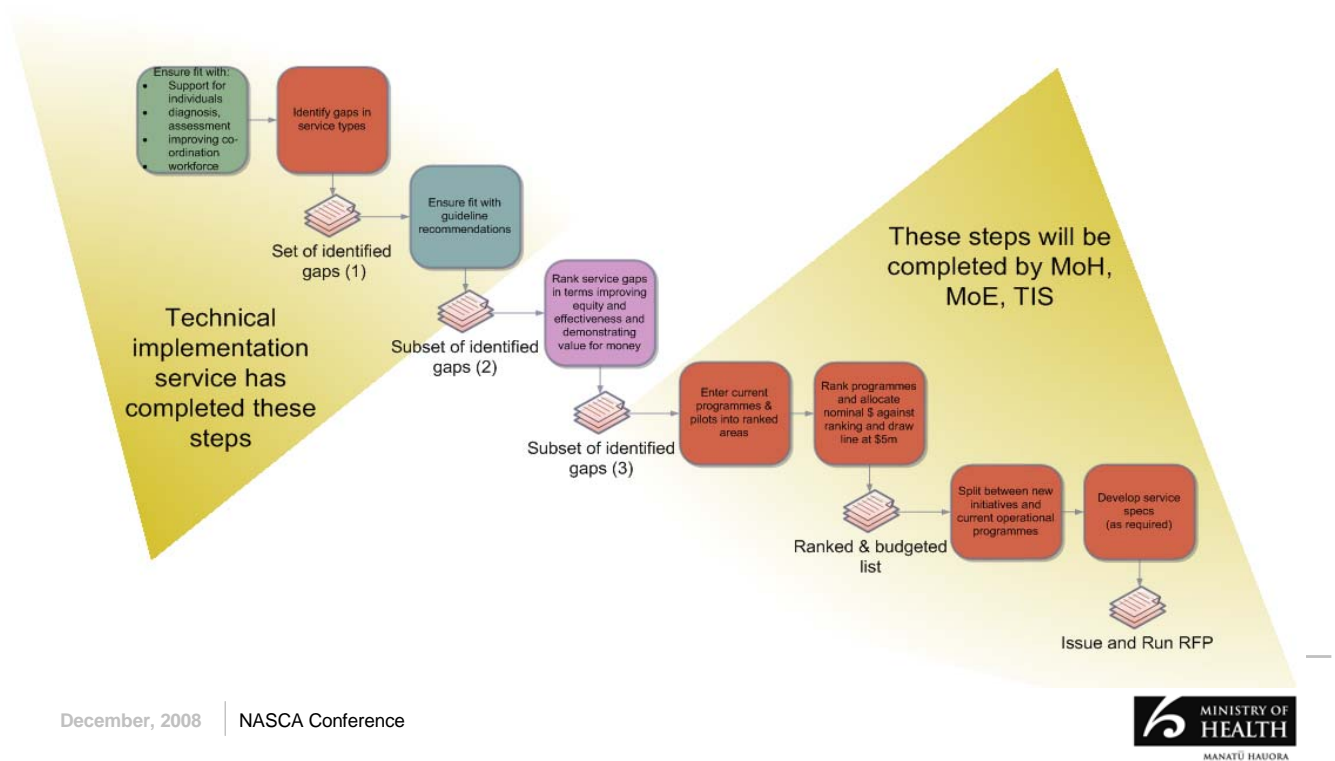
Throughout the prioritisation process, the New Zealand Guidelines Group ensured that investments would contribute to implementing guideline recommendations.

Discussions on priorities were framed by the following principles:

- 1) How effective would the service be in improving the lives of people living with ASD?
- 2) How equitable would the service be (in terms of improving equity of access)?
- 3) How does the service contribute to the achievement of whānau ora?
- 4) Are there any constraints that might limit or prevent service development?

The results of the prioritisation process were then incorporated into the implementation plan. The following process map depicts this visually.

Prioritisation and allocation process



N.B. TIS is the Technical Implementation Service made up of a consortium led by the New Zealand Guidelines Group.

Implementation

Three phases of service development are planned to implement this funding. These include:

1. scaling up existing, proven programmes and services
2. bringing on stream new initiatives and embarking on 'investment' activities
3. delivering on the 'investment' activities, consolidating initiatives and incorporating measures to provide for sustainability

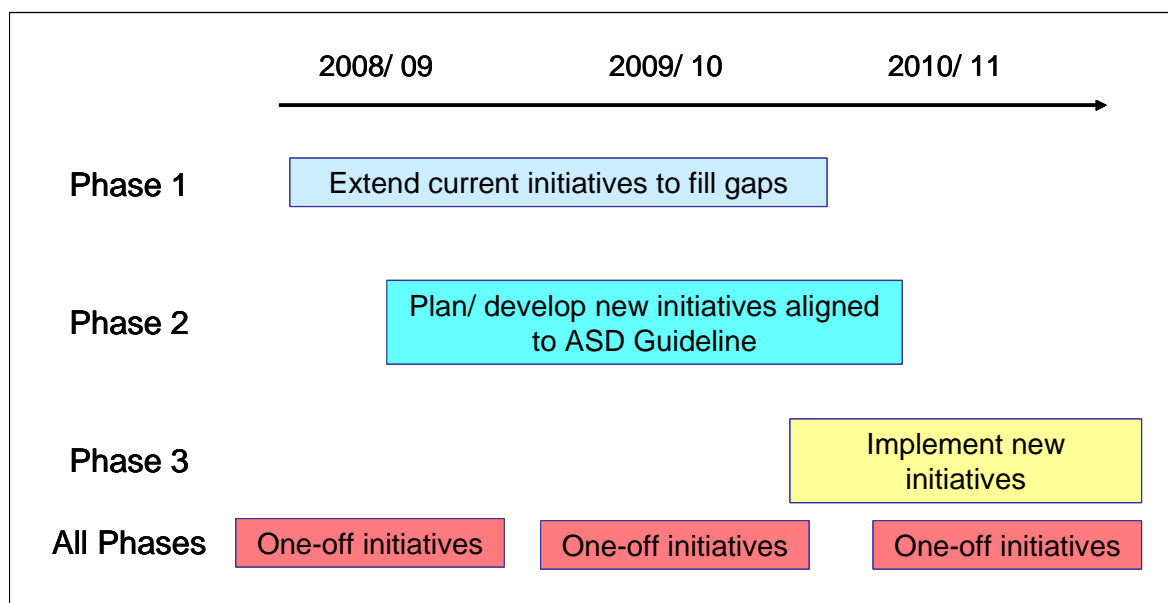
Broadly, the allocation is shown in the following table:

Purchase Phases	Priorities
Scaling up of existing, proven programmes and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to strengthen families (e.g. parent ed) • Interventions/Support (not age specific) • Respite
Bringing on stream new initiatives, embarking on (and embedding) 'investment' activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and diagnosis • Support to strengthen families (e.g. parent ed) • Interventions/Support (not age specific) • Respite • Coordination
Across the phases: Sector Communication and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a Living Guideline approach • Model development

It is important to note that this allocation does not implement all of the guideline's recommendations. To do this will require additional funding and reallocation over time.

Relationship between phases and financial years

The purchasing phases are not directly linked to financial years. The following picture indicates that, for example, funding allocated in the first financial year can go into bringing on stream new initiatives, which is a phase two activity. This is depicted in the diagram below:



2) Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education, as co-sponsor of the NZ ASD Guideline, is working closely with the Ministry of Health, NZGG and Altogether Autism to support the implementation plan. Education is taking the lead on the 'Living Guideline' work programme, and commissioned the technical reviews of published research on the use of applied behaviour analysis interventions for people with ASD. Education's existing ASD 'investment' work programme is already well aligned with the NZ ASD Guideline – for details, see www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/ASD. During the past three months a number of workshops and presentations have been given to raise awareness about the impact of ASD and the implications of the Guideline recommendations for practice.

3) New Zealand Guidelines Group and the Implementation Advisory Group

The first newsletter from the ASD Technical Information Service can be accessed through the following link <http://www.nzgg.org.nz/download/files/ASDTechnicalInformationService-1.pdf>

This newsletter provides information about the New Zealand Guidelines Group, the role of the Implementation Advisory Group and the decisions they are required to make, and the work they are doing to inform the Ministry of Health to implement the New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline.

4) Altogether Autism

Altogether Autism is the National Autism Disability Information Service (DIAS) contracted by the Ministry of Health to provide information and advisory services for people with autism spectrum disorders, their families, whanau and the wider New Zealand community. Their newsletter provides information about the activities they are working with the Ministry of Health to deliver to the sector to improve the communications for people about autism spectrum disorder. The link is: <http://www.altogetherautism.org.nz/file/Newsletters/October-2008.pdf>

5) Autism New Zealand

A highlight for Autism New Zealand this year was the biennial conference held in September in Christchurch. Tony Attwood, Stephen Shore and Patricia Howlin were three excellent keynote presenters and their contributions were supplemented by over 20 other presentations mainly from New Zealand. The range and quality of these presentations reflect very well on the current situation in the New Zealand ASD community.

Autism New Zealand is pleased to be able to increase the numbers of Earlybird courses in the year to June 2009. This, along with a similar increase the previous year, has allowed us to reduce the waiting time for prospective enrolments.

In Christchurch in late November, Autism New Zealand, in partnership with the southern regional office of the Ministry of Education, ran a two day PECS training course for 46 parents, caregivers, support people, teachers and other professionals. We were very pleased to be able to bring this training to the south island and we hope to repeat it next year.

The implementation of the ASD Guidelines is well underway with preparations for a range of initiatives well advanced. 2009 promises to be an exciting time for the ASD community.