

FPSA Grant Report

FPSA funded me to train in the use of the ADOS and ADI-R. These are tools that can be used in the process of assessment for Autism. The training was undertaken through 'Beginning with A'. It was 5 full days in duration (30th October – 3rd November 2023) and carried out via zoom.

I am a Clinical Psychologist and work in a Children's Secure Home. Part of my role involves getting to know the young people in our care, completing assessments and developing an understanding of their presentation and needs. We often have young people admitted to Clayfields House whereby the external network hold queries around whether the young person has an underlying diagnosis of Autism that has to date been missed or misunderstood. At times we also see potential signs of Autism and question whether Autism could play a part in the young people's interactions and actions and may help to explain how they have found themselves in secure accommodation. The training in the ADOS & ADI-R has equipped me with tools to support the assessment (or re-assessment) of Autism. It is vital that these assessments are thorough for this population of young people due to their presentations often being complex and usually impacted on by a variety of elements/experiences. Being able to use the ADOS and ADI-R enables me to complete a thorough and considered assessment of Autism with the aim to ensure that all the young people admitted to our centre are well understood and subsequently their needs are met.

The training I attended was excellent. The trainer clearly has many years of experience working with people with Autism and was able to talk about the ADOS and ADI-R really comprehensively. She made everyone feel really comfortable and made the week extremely enjoyable. I was a bit apprehensive that the online nature of the training would detract from my learning, but having completed the training, I actually feel that the online nature coupled with the structure of the day/content, made the training extremely time efficient. I particularly liked how we had several opportunities to practice scoring the ADOS/ADI-R and each time, were able to compare our scores with 'guide scores' to get feedback on how we might score more accurately. The resources that were shared with us were great and will support me moving forward to implement what I have learnt. By the end of the week, my confidence in using these tools was high and I felt ready to get started! I would absolutely recommend this training to anyone needing training in this area.

I am now able to support the rest of my team in the assessment of Autism. Having a comprehensive understanding of the young people in our care should not only support the centre to meet their needs while they live with us, but also the external network and wider support services to also understand the young people and meet their needs once they return to the community or move on to a different custodial setting. I am so grateful to FPSA for funding this training – it will have a such a significant impact on the vulnerable young people that spend time in our secure setting.