

Ref: FOI/GS/ID 6592

Please reply to:
FOI Administrator
Trust Management
Maidstone Hospital
Hermitage Lane
Maidstone, Kent
ME16 9QQ
Email: mtw-tr.foiadmin@nhs.net
www.mtw.nhs.uk

10 March 2021

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I am writing in response to your request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in relation to Autism training for staff.

You asked:

Can you please let me know what steps the hospital at Pembury has taken to help autistic people to feel more comfortable during visits and what training has been given to staff to help them to properly interact with autistic people.

What training has been given to hospital management around issues of autism?

Trust response:

The trust employs a learning disability liaison clinical nurse specialist. In addition to learning disability, this nurse can advise on matters relating to autistic spectrum condition (ASC).

The Equality Act (2010) put a duty on all public organisations to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities.

The Trust actively encourages staff to make reasonable adjustments on an individual person basis. Some examples of reasonable adjustments may include:

- a. Giving someone extra time or a longer appointment.
- b. Reducing wait times as far as practically possible.
- c. Providing a quiet waiting area or low stimulus environment.
- d. Explaining information clearly, in simple language and short sentences.
Avoiding using medical jargon.

- e. In exceptional circumstances we can permit a carer to support the person in hospital during the pandemic.

It is not always possible to put reasonable adjustments in place in an emergency situation but the staff will aim to accommodate patient's needs as far as possible, as soon as it is safe to do so.

The trust is committed to delivering the Accessible Information Standard (2016) and has a range of easy read information leaflets that are available on request.

At present autism training is not mandatory however nationally as a result of Oliver McGowan's campaign, autism training will become mandatory. This was due to commence in Spring 2021, however has been pushed back to Spring 2022 due to the pandemic. Despite it not being mandatory, autism training is on offer to all staff across the Trust at all levels, there is a 1 hour taster session followed by a half day training that staff can book onto. People with autism have contributed to the current training package.

The Trust board members meet with people with learning disabilities and/or autism quarterly. The board is keen to receive feedback and will proactively follow up any concerns.

You have also requested information relating to particular staff members regarding their individual training in Autism awareness. The Trust will not release this information as it is considered to be the personal information of the staff member. This part of your request is refused using the limitations available under Section 10 and Section 11 of the Data Protection Act 1998.

The information you have requested is therefore exempt under Section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.